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SONG OF THE MYRTLE.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

I.

Other trees may have sprung into beautiful birth
Since Creation's first pulse throbbed a branch from the Earth,
But I know that in *Eden's* blest bower I grew
'Mid the brightest of beams and the sweetest of dew.

II.

For He named me the tenderest symbol of love,
With my branch for the vow and my leaf for the dove;
And the Seraphs themselves from my soft-waving boughs
Braided many a wreath for their glittering brows.

III.

And O when the garlands would fall on the sod,
As they duly soared back through the sky to their God,
How the beautiful Mother of Men would entwine
Their blest leaves on her nuptials' own innermost shrine!

IV.

Let the laurel for glory be cherished by Earth,
I've a sweeter, a dearer a heavenlier worth,
With my branch for the vow and my leaf for the dove—
For I symbol the Soul of the Universe—LOVE!

THE MUTE SINGER.

BY ANNA CORA RITCHIE.

CHAPTER XI.

CONVALESCENCE.

When the Sabbath ushered in another week, Sylvie was able to rise from her couch. Propped by pillows in an antiquated arm-chair, belonging to Ursule, she sat by the window, listening to the music of church bells, and gazing upon the little pot of mignionette that still stood upon the window-sill. Though Dr. Souvestre had sternly issued a decree for the banishment of all flowers from the sick chamber, there was nothing else visible upon which her beauty-loving eyes could rest with passing pleasure. Dingy house-tops and congregations of chimneys hemmed in the prospect. The faintly-colored, straggling mignionette looked feeble and drooping, for it had often lacked care, or been thrust aside, or forgotten, during her illness. Sylvie involuntarily compared the sickly plant, which now sent forth no perceptible odor, to herself.

"A little sunshine and water," she mused, "will revive this poor flower, and call forth its lost perfume;—are there no strengthening and freshening influences to restore my voice? Ah, I remember well, it was this humble little flower, that, blooming in secret, charmed me by its gift of fragrance, and inspired the hope that, despite my own obscurity and lowliness, *my gift* would not be wasted."

Sylvie's health now slowly but steadily improved. Each day she grew stronger, but no sign gave the faintest promise of restoration to her vocal powers. She seldom essayed to speak; the effort had so often proved futile that, little by little, a disinclination to make the attempt grew upon her. She communicated her wishes, or made replies, by the most eloquent pantomime; and, when that wordless medium proved insufficient, the porcelain slate, and little silver pencil of Maitre Beaujeu, were in requisition.

Dame Manot, Mathieu, and a few other unpretending but devoted friends, were permitted to visit her; yet all their tender inquiries, and touching words of sympathy, conjured no chance sound from her lips. That she was *mute*, appeared to her a matter of course; not that she did not cherish the deep, underlying hope, that this spell of silence would one day be broken; but a heavenly voice within whispered, that by unmurmuringly accepting the present, and trusting in the future, she could alone receive the good made possible to unrebellious spirits. God's patience, which lightens sorrow through *endurance*, not *combat*, sank softly into her meek and chastened soul. A holy trust preserved her from ever doubting the wisdom which permitted her affliction—a trust which does not only deem *that* blest which we *receive*, but believes greater blessings are oftentimes sent through that which we lose.

> "'God bless all our *gains*,' say we;
> But 'God bless all our *losses*,'
> Better suits with our degree."

Sylvie soon began to experience that delightful sense of convalescence which makes an invalid feel as if the whole system were freshened and renewed. It seemed to her as though her soul grew stronger, and more largely fitted for life's manifold purposes, as its delicate receptacle gained new vigor.

This pleasant state was often broken in upon by her mother's contrarious moods, which tested all the patience, trust, and spiritual strength that Sylvie had acquired.

On one occasion, when Maitre Beaujeu's magical violin had roused her to a pitch of musical ecstacy, Madame de la Roche took advantage of a momentary pause to say, "I have been waiting some time, Maitre Beaujeu, to make a suggestion of importance; you must excuse my taking this opportunity. I want to speak to you about that *piano!* Here the cumbersome old thing has been occupying space, and eating up gold, unopened, for nearly two months. It always *was* hard work to pay for its hire, and *now* what it costs is money quite thrown into the gutter. *Sylvie will never need it more*, for she only played accompaniments to her songs, and there's no chance of her singing again in a hurry. *I* think the piano ought to be sent home! Won't you oblige me by attending to this matter?"

The rude shock of these words sent a convulsive shudder through Sylvie's frame, and her quivering lips moved without sound, as her nerveless fingers grasped her pencil.

Beaujeu dived into his snuff-box, and a liberal and vehement snuffing of its contents partially smothered a sound very much like the gnash of teeth blended with a muttered oath.

But tenderness towards Sylvie had taught him self-control when he was irritated by her mother, and he answered, in a calmly caustic tone, "Your prudence is highly commendable, Madame; I will attend to the piano. *Until* I send for it, you will be good enough to leave the instrument where it now stands; but it is understood that *you* give it up from to-day, and it will henceforth cost you nothing."

"I shall feel more satisfied when it is *gone*, for there is no use of nourishing false hopes," resumed Madame de la Roche, pertinaciously. "It's a deal better to make up one's mind at once that there is *no hope*, and I am sure there never was any for *us*. Yet there's Sylvie, who, in spite of all we have undergone, and notwithstanding her own misfortune, persists in saying that she don't believe in *luck*."

Sylvie wrote upon her slate, in reply, "I do not believe in *luck*, simply because I do not believe in *chance*, and I *do* believe in *God*. The ways of God are mysterious—inscrutable—but God cannot be *wrong*."

"Oh, that's a very proper theory," replied her mother, glancing over the words Sylvie had traced; "but I don't see that it proves itself when all one's best intentions are frustrated, and all one's most prudent and promising plans are brought to nought."

Sylvie wrote, "We have hoped great things; we have sown, as we thought, the seed for a great harvest; if God choose that our large hopes should wear the shape of small realities—if it be His will that the harvest should wither before it ripen—He who is never *motiveless* has an end in view which our clay-clouded vision can not yet behold. We have only to be willing to receive the small gifts He sends, instead of the great ones we coveted, and be patient until our eyes are opened to see God's reason for allowing us this much and no more."

"That is easy preaching, hard practising," resumed the mother, shaking her head mistrustfully. "There is no getting over the fact that all the good gifts of this life are very unequally distributed."

Sylvie paused awhile, as though musing upon this *seeming* truth, then took up her pencil, softly smiling as she wrote, "*Not* unequally *in reality*, however unequal the distribution may *appear*. If every one is allowed just the amount of success and prosperity—is subjected to just the degree of trial or temptation—is placed in precisely the situation which will develop his true character, bring out his evil inclinations through exciting causes, that he may become aware of and conquer them, and call forth his noble attributes, that they may be perfected by use, can we call men's allotted portions unequal? If to fit man for the highest possible felicity which he is capable of experiencing, here and hereafter, be the great end of existence, can we talk of *inequality* when that end is obtained?"

Madame de la Roche read aloud what Sylvie had written and ejaculated: "I can not imagine where the child gets her singular ideas! She grows a deal too wise for her mother's simple comprehension. But, with all her superior understanding, I don't think her logic will ever convince me that there was any necessity for *our* misfortunes. I'll never believe that it was *for the best* that she should suddenly be struck *dumb*, just as all Paris had gone crazy about her voice! And I cannot see what good is to come of our being lifted to the topmost pinnacle of hope, to be cast down to the lowest depths of despair. No, I maintain, I shall never see any good in *that*."

Sylvie not only believed in, but she had begun to see, that hidden good which her mother resolutely doubted. An involuntary self-examination had been the result of the many long reveries into which she had fallen during her convalescence, and had revealed how injurious to her own character might have proved the "tinsel clink of compliments" that had sounded in her ears, the homage that had lifted her to startling heights in her own estimation, the perils by which she had been surrounded in an atmosphere of adulation,—perils which she might not have been strong enough to encounter.

Then her father—she vainly tried to close her eyes upon the conviction that his reckless prodigality could only be stemmed by the check of poverty. She did not want to admit to herself that this first, harsh lesson was sent to *him*, also, because through privation and adversity, he could alone be made aware of his inconsequent extravagance, or be taught the most common prudence, or be inspired with a sense of the honesty of economy.

Sylvie was now able to walk about the chamber, and, if her mother had permitted, she would have resumed some of her former duties.

Dr. Souvestre, who had attended her daily, and made numerous experiments upon her throat, exhausting the virtues of caustic, and iodine, and other potent agents, finally pronounced that she was well enough to receive benefit from fresh air, and ordered her to drive out several times every week.

This opinion had been given the day before the first of November, which is set apart for the great fête of All Saints day.

That general holiday was most welcome to Maitre Beaujeu, for it afforded him a period of rare freedom. The number of his pupils had so rapidly increased that he had little leisure, and the moments devoted to Sylvie were snatched, at intervals, between his lessons. As soon as he heard the doctor's order, Maitre Beaujeu determined to see it obeyed. *Père la Chaise* is the usual resort of the Parisian populace upon this particular *fête* day, but Maitre Beaujeu decided to carry Sylvie to the *Jardin des Plantes*, as a locality where the crowd would be avoided, and she could enjoy air and exercise with more freedom.

In so gentle a tone that no one, who had only heard him address others, could have recognized his voice, he said to her: "Would not you and Mam'selle Ursule like to pass a day beneath the trees, and listen to the birds, instead of to a worse musician? If you would, we will go to the *Jardin des Plantes* to-morrow. There—there—no need of writing your answer——;" as she took up her pencil; "your face has replied, and I will come for you to-morrow at ten."

Maitre Beaujeu had now obtained such decided influence over the parents of Sylvie, who felt how much depended upon his good will, that they neither threw any obstacle in the way of his project.

Sylvie had given no thought to her toilette, or, rather, she had not remembered that her scanty wardrobe would not allow her to make a presentable appearance. But as her health was gradually restored, Ursule had ventured to suggest to Beaujeu that his *protégée* would need more additions to her wardrobe. The hundred francs due to the young singer had been exhausted during her illness, but the trustworthy dress-maker was ordered to look upon the musician as Sylvie's banker, and received a *carte blanche* to purchase whatever was necessary for her health, her comfort, or her toilette.

On the morning of the fête, Ursule entered the young girl's room, before she had risen, and placed beside her a neatly folded bundle, and a bandbox. While Sylvie watched her visiter with wondering eyes, the latter complacently, and with tantalizing deliberation, extracted pin after pin from the cover of the package, and then drew forth a black silk dress, a paletot to match, a neat, linen chemisette with sleeves, a pair of dainty gaiters and gloves. Then she opened the bandbox and exhibited a black velvet bonnet ornamented only with a bunch of pansies in the white cap within. Ursule had consulted economy as well as elegance in the choice of attire, and had duly reflected that black silk would be unexceptionable on many occasions that would necessarily present themselves if Sylvie returned to her artist-life, and would outwear many other materials.

"Now get up, and let us see how the dress fits. I made it by your old measure," said Ursule, gaily. "As for the bonnet, I am sure that will become you. Do you not approve of my choice?"

Sylvie nodded in the affirmative, but extended her hand for her slate, an action which seemed to indicate that her surprise and pleasure were mingled with some uneasiness. Ursule stopped her, after the style of Maitre Beaujeu; it was odd to see how often she copied his manners.

"I know what you want to ask. You are such a mercenary little individual, you are troubled about my extravagance. Set your heart at rest. Ever since you have been ill, Maitre Beaujeu has furnished me, at intervals, with portions of the hundred francs that Monsieur Le Grand paid to him for you, and I flatter myself that I have expended what was entrusted to me with praiseworthy economy. As for the grand toilette you are to make to-day, that is a matter arranged between Maitre Bacujeu and myself."

That Ursule's taste was irreproachable, and Sylvie's attire became her, the compliment which her æsthetic tutor *looked*, but did not *utter*, bore ample testimony.

In her new attire her figure seemed taller, more womanly, and the gracefully cut paletot concealed its exceeding slenderness. The sweet, pure face that looked out from its surrounding of black velvet, like the picture of some virgin saint from a sombre frame, was spiritualized by the very pallor of the countenance and the absence of rounded outlines. The great blue eyes shone with the celestial softness of a sorrow accepted and meekly borne. Upon the lips was the seal of peace, breaking their characteristic primness into a half smile.

It was a glorious autumn day; the air was slightly bracing, but not cold; the golden sunlight tinged all creation with a Midas touch, yet did not oppress with its fervor, or dazzle with its brilliancy.

The last time Maitre Beaujeu had officiated as his gifted pupil's escort, his narrow means had only permitted him to provide a common *fiacre*, but now a *voiture de remise*, the nearest approach to a private carriage that could be obtained, stood at the humble entrance. Not that elegance had any weight with the old musician, it was the comfort of his dear invalid, and the fitness of the conveyance as regarded her, that he alone consulted.

As he carefully conducted her down the steep stairs, with what a rush of emotion she recalled *that night* when she had darted lightly up those steps, her elastic feet winged by excitement, her heart wildly throbbing with undefined hopes, her whole frame vibrating with the echo of prophecies of future greatness which had electrified her ears! *That night* when her soul had sprung up, full statured of a sudden, and pierced through its chrysalis clay, and floated in an atmosphere of sunshine and flowers, freighted with sweet scents and delicious sounds! *That night*, when her spirit first recognized its fellowship with beings of a loftier sphere through the might of music, and the free masonry of genius!

Maitre Beaujeu knocked at Ursule's door in passing, and she came forth at the summons, ready for the drive.

Beside the carriage steps, holding open the door, stood Mathieu, in his best threadbare suit. Sylvie smilingly saluted him, as she took her seat; Ursule sat down beside her, but before Beaujeu ascended to his place, he said to the boy:

"Now, up with you by the driver!"

The late cynic, once having tasted the sweetness of imparting happiness, was often moved by an impulse to drink deeper of the sacred chalice. And yet he was half ashamed of his kind promptings. He would never have thought of excusing his own *rudeness or hardness*, but now he said, apologetically:

"I thought the little hunchback might be of service if we wanted any one to wait upon us, or go upon an errand. He has evinced such absolute devotion to you during your illness, and the little monkey is such a devotee to our art, that, as it costs nothing, I thought it would do no harm to let him have a drive; though, of course, I take him *chiefly for the sake of his services.*"

Sylvie comprehended her master too well to answer, save by a look of thanks.

Encircled by Ursule's supporting arm, she leaned back in the carriage, striving to calm the agitation produced by the vivid recollections that crowded into her brain. The fresh, invigorating air caressed her flushing cheeks, and cooled her brow; the easy motion of the carriage soothed her, and lulled the pain of too busy thoughts, until her wonted tranquility gradually returned.

Beaujeu, as he silently contemplated his opposite companions, wondered how he could ever have fancied Sylvie's countenance positively ugly, and the face of her warm-hearted friend too plain for his fastidious eyes to dwell upon.

Ursule's physiognomy was so sympathetic, so trust-inspiring, that it seemed impossible for one to whom it was familiar to deem it homely. Yet not a single lineament was susceptible of description. Her eyes were neither large nor small, neither light nor dark, but of a nameless, nondescript color. Her forehead was neither high nor low, nor broad, nor narrow. Her nose was neither of the classic aquiline nor intellectual Roman, nor the vulgar snub, nor the *piquante* turn-up order. It was simply an ordinary nose. Her mouth had no more marked peculiarity of shape; it was just a common-place mouth. Yet something, subtly shining out from within, gave light and life to all her features, blended them into harmony, and endowed them with the capacity of multiform expression. In her person, too, there was the same absence of emphasis. She was neither tall nor short, nor plump, nor thin—all her proportions were mediocre. But neutral tints were merely her outward coloring, and not the painting of her mental mould. A tender heart, united to a strong, common sense, (better defined as the most *uncommon* kind of sense,) gave force to her whole character, and combined a quick perception of what was just and right with a merciful leaning towards the side of gentleness, and an unselfish consideration for the well-being of others.

The drive seemed only too short for the silent party, who appeared to need no words to communicate to each other their quiet but deep enjoyment. When they reached the *Jardin des Plantes*, Beaujeu entrusted to Mathieu a covered basket and a blanket shawl, and the boy's mouth-stretching, eye-kindling delight was greatly increased by the discovery that he could actually be of service.

Carriages are not permitted to enter the gates, and Sylvie, to her regret, found herself too feeble to visit the note-worthy objects which attract curious crowds to this celebrated garden. She had hardly traversed one of those beautiful alleys, where interlacing branches of tall trees shut out the mid-day sun, when her feet faltered and her head drooped, like a flower too heavy for its stem;—her scanty stock of strength was exhausted.

Maitre Beaujeu spread the blanket shawl on the soft green grass, beneath a magnificent clump of sugar maples, and made her and Ursule sit down. He reclined at a little distance, and Mathieu stood leaning against a tree, keeping watch over the unopened basket, and finding abundant happiness in gazing at Sylvie, unrebuked and unnoticed.

Some remark of Ursule's struck the rock of Beaujeu's pent up conversational powers, and the stream gushed forth with a sparkling freedom that amazed the admiring spinster. Her former awe had somewhat melted away, and it was now wholly dissolved by this genial flow which seemed the involuntary out-pouring of feelings and reflections, soul-prisoned for years.

Ursule's ingenuous tongue was the key to her heart, and the former was soon set in motion and the latter unlocked.

The reminiscences of the autumnal couple naturally travelled back to that sweet spring time over which memory casts her mellowing and felicitous light. Many were the anecdotes they related of their by-gone days, until each felt as though youth had, for the moment, returned, and brought back some of its quick throbbings, and joyful exhilaration, and bright glancings at life, and careless disdain of tyrannous form.

Sylvie did not regret that she had forgotten her porcelain slate, for it allowed her to commune with her own thoughts. She sat reclining against a reddening maple tree, gazing up at the blue sky, through the golden and crimson canopy of quivering autumn leaves, and looking as though her soul were pouring forth anthems of thanksgiving.

She had not the remotest conception of the length of time she had been sitting thus, when Beaujeu signed to Mathieu to bring him the basket, and, with Ursule's assistance, a delicate collation was spread upon the smooth turf. Dainty bits of cold fowl, thin slices of tongue, snowy rolls and biscuits, light cake, a few *bon bons*, and a small bottle of *vin ordinaire*.

Mathieu played the Ganymede; and as Sylvie's position required him to kneel down to help her, the reverential action appeared to be the spontaneous manifestation of his own emotion.

Her reverie was broken by his comical appearance, while offering her a plate in this lowly attitude. Her sense of the ludicrous provoked, but kindness repressed, her mirth, and Mathieu did not suspect the merriment he excited. The air and the drive had sharpened her usually dull appetite, and the repast was partaken of with a novel relish.

Lengthening shadows warned Beaujeu to look at his watch; (of which he was not a little proud, for it had been presented by a class of pupils, and was the first he had ever possessed;) it was three o'clock, and he dreaded the least approach of dampness for Sylvie. But when he told her that the hour for their return had arrived, she grew quite rebellious in her reluctance to depart, and Beaujeu was obliged to assume his old tone of authority, though his attempt at sternness was a most transparent counterfeit.

That happy day closed without alloy, and was written in shining characters in the chronicles of four lives.

The next afternoon, when Beaujeu came, as usual, to charm away an hour by his music, he said to Sylvie:

"I gave Mademoiselle de St. Amar a lesson to-day. She was enchanted to hear that you had

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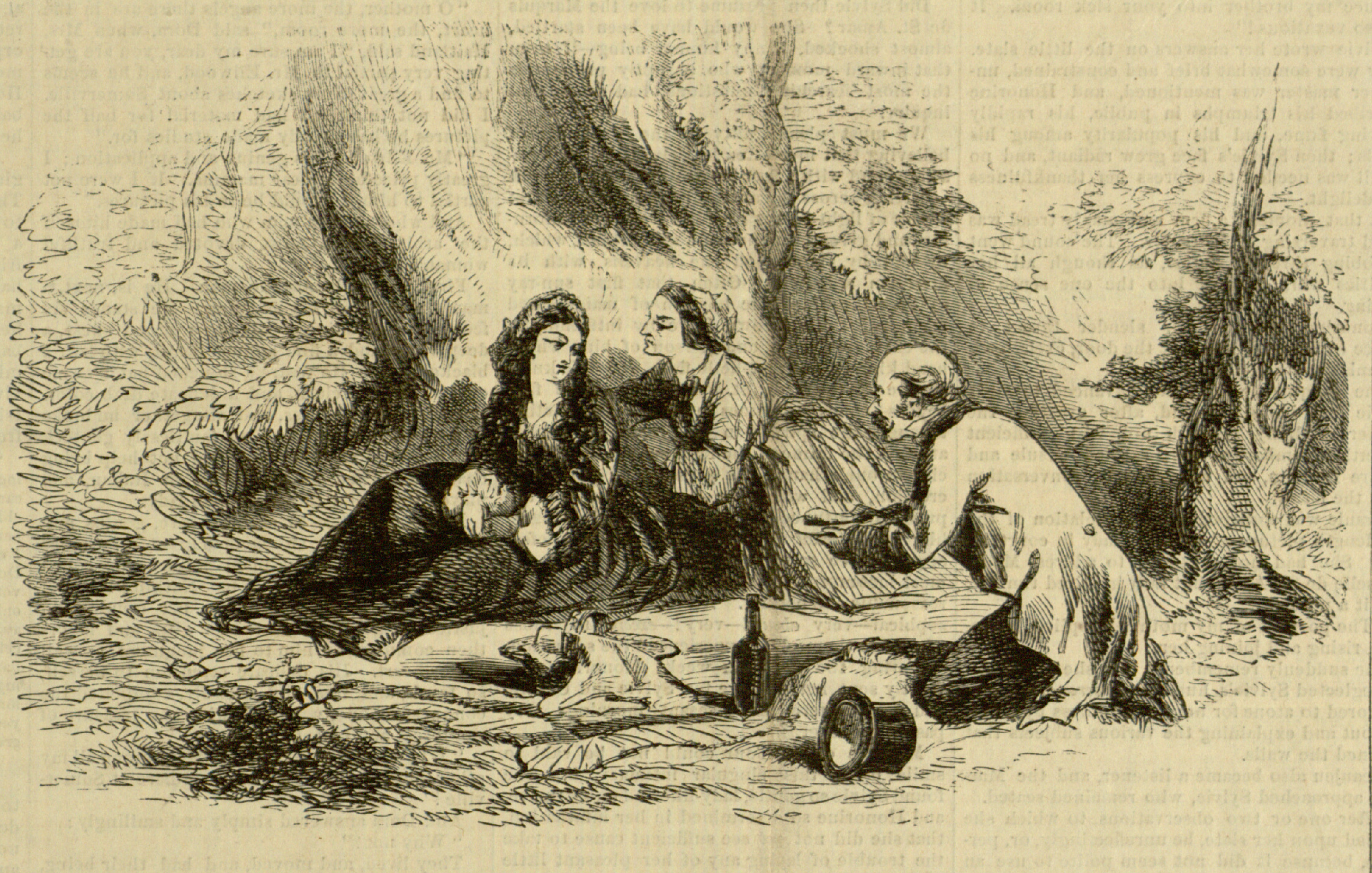

SYLVIE AND HER FRIENDS TAKING A REPAST.

actually driven out. She insists upon sending her carriage to-morrow, that you may enjoy another drive. Do you intend to refuse her polite offer, or will you go?"

"May I?" wrote Sylvie.

"I see no impropriety in your accepting; and I will invite that good Ursule to accompany you. What is the matter now? Why is that great shadow darkening over your face? About what are you thinking?"

"I was thinking how far beneath Mademoiselle de St. Amar I am!" wrote Sylvie.

"Nonsense! God's gift of genius places you upon an equality with any of God's creatures!"

"But if he revoke that gift, by taking from me the power to prove my claims to what you call genius,—what then?"

Beaujeu was more embarrassed by that straight-forward question than he liked to betray. Assisted by a few pinches of snuff, he answered, evasively: "I don't like *ifs*—they always herald some *disagreeable*, but often *unlikely* possibility. But we have no time for idle speculations if you want to hear 'The Carnival of Venice' to-day, for I have another lesson to give shortly."

When did not Sylvie want to hear the old violin?

Beaujeu was in unusually high spirits when he came, the next day, to accompany Sylvie and Ursule on their drive.

The carriage of the Marquis de St. Amar arrived at the appointed hour, and gladdened the eyes of Dame Manot.

Beaujeu behaved in a most inexplicable hilarious manner. He rubbed his hands, chuckled and laughed to himself, tossed up his hat, then checked his mirthful demonstrations with comical self-rebuke, and, plunging into his snuff-box, extravagantly powdered his new suit with its dingy contents.

When Ursule suggested that they should drive to the *Bois de Boulogne*, he replied: "We shall see! we shall see!" and hummed a gay tune, alternately looking out of the window and into the carriage to watch Sylvie's face.

"Why, we are in the *Faubourg St. Germain*," exclaimed Ursule; "and here we are stopping!"

"Are we, indeed!" responded Beaujeu, jocosely. "How stupid of that pompous, thick-skulled coachman, is it not! I suppose he does not know what he is about!"

A massive gate was thrown open, and they drove into a spacious *court*, and stopped before the entrance of a superb mansion.

"What does it mean?" asked Ursule, in great trepidation.

Sylvie's face echoed the question.

"We shall see! we shall!" replied Beaujeu, still vehemently rubbing his hands.

"But where are we? Whom are we going to see?" inquired Ursule, now wrought up to a high pitch of nervous agitation.

"One of my pupils," answered the musician, proudly. "Come, let me hand you out. Give me your hand first, Ma'm'selle Ursule."

Very unwillingly, and with a frightened air, the spinster obeyed. As the door of the magnificent residence was thrown open by a liveried servant, she drew back, and almost clung to Sylvie, who was mounting the steps.

They had hardly crossed the threshold, when light feet were heard in the distance, and a fairy-like form glided rapidly towards them, and Sylvie was clasped in the arms of Honorine!

While she embraced her humble friend, Mademoiselle de St. Amar turned her head towards Beaujeu, exclaiming: "You would not promise to come, and yet I looked for you. I was watching at the window. Ah, Mademoiselle Sylvie, how we have missed your beautiful voice! How we have mourned over your illness!"

Sylvie, for the first time for a long period, made an effort to speak—one moment she had forgotten her lost faculty. The gasping, guttural sound died away in a faint groan. She was more keenly conscious than ever before of her privation, and intense pain mingled with the joy of again beholding Mademoiselle de St. Amar. That mute, woful gaze turned on Honorine, was more pathetic than words or tears.

Maitre Beaujeu, unnoticed by Sylvie, had possessed himself of the little porcelain slate, which he now placed in her hands.

The shrinking Ursule was then presented to their youthful hostess, whose courteous greeting partially restored the equanimity of her confused visiter. The latter was ejaculating to herself, "how fortunate that I chose Sylvie that black silk dress and velvet bonnet, and that I put on my best of everything!"

Honorine, without loosening her clasp of Sylvie's hand, led the way to her own *boudoir*.

Ursule paused in wonder as her feet sank into the depths of the soft carpet, among mimic flowers as vivid and life-like as though they had been freshly strewn to cover the floor. Then her eyes wandered, in amazed admiration, over the masterly pictures, chaste statues, costly mirrors, rich draperies, and other exquisitely tasteful adornments of the apartment.

But Sylvie, seated beside Honorine, her small hand prisoned in one as tiny, looked only into the bright face before her, unconsciously tracing in the clear, amber eyes and ample brow a resemblance that quickened her pulses and sent the ruby current in a pleasant glow through her violet veins.

Three years before the date of our narrative, the parents of the Marquis de St. Amar and of his only sister were numbered among the victims of the cholera, then raging in Paris. Mademoiselle de St. Amar was eighteen at that period, though her infantile form and child-like manners caused her to appear much younger. Her brother was ten years her senior. A widowed and childless aunt, whose fortune had been dissipated by a profligate husband, was invited by the Marquis to preside over his household, and become the *chaperone* or social guardian of his sister.

Madame de la Tour accepted this pleasant post with gratification, though hardly with gratitude, for her narrow nature had scant room for the play of that noble emotion. Conventionality was her creed,—the laws of good society her decalogue,—indolence her heaven. Unruffled quietude, free from responsibility, and an existence smoothly gliding through the worn channels approved by the world, were to her the acme of felicity. This repugnance to exertion enabled her spirited young niece, the spoiled darling of the household—

"A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,"

to gain an ascendancy over her, and enjoy larger liberty than is accorded to young French maidens of her rank.

Madame de la Tour was subject to *migraine*, and various imaginary ailments, the mantle of an invalid being a graceful cloak for her constitutional inertness. Honorine was consequently left to follow the bent of her own girlish impulses. She had no idea of imprisoning herself whenever her legitimate *chaperone* kept within doors, and tormented her brother into becoming her escort, though among the Parisian *élite* a brother is not exactly regarded as a fitting protector for a high-born maiden.

It was on one of these occasions that she first beheld, heard, rapturously admired, and formed the acquaintance of the successful debutante.

In vain Madame de la Tour chided her niece for an unaristocratic amount of enthusiasm; the peace-loving elder lady had not strength of character to contend against the good-humored wilfulness, and pretty petulances of the younger; and, little by little, Honorine gained complete mastery, and established a right to the choice of her friends.

But this apathetic guardian, whose thoughts and time were somewhat unequally divided between her supposed ailments, her toilette, her lap-dogs, and her niece, (the last receiving the smallest share,) when a favorite end was to be obtained, roused herself sufficiently to exhibit a decided talent for *plotting*. By the aid of this feminine accomplishment, she did not scruple to work out any desirable consummation. *Manœuvering* was her sole weapon of power, her sceptre over her rebellious subject and relative. She never tried to *compel* the wayward girl to any course, but she often laid snares to *entrap* her into paths she had no inclination to tread.

We return to the occupants of the boudoir.

Honorine was telling Sylvie how often and how anxiously she had inquired after her, and how kindly Monsieur Beaujeu had supplied her with bulletins.

"How I longed to see you while you were ill!" cried Honorine; "but there was no managing it, or you would certainly have found me at your side. That tiresome aunt of mine, Madame de la Tour, refused to accompany me upon what she called one of my romantic expeditions, though I tried to startle her into acquiescence by threatening to go alone, as I could not introduce my brother into your sick room. It was so vexatious!"

Sylvie wrote her answers on the little slate. They were somewhat brief and constrained, until her master was mentioned, and Honorine described his triumphs in public, his rapidly growing fame, and his popularity among his pupils; then Sylvie's face grew radiant, and no pencil was needed to express her thankfulness and delight.

At that moment a firm and manly tread was heard traversing the corridor. The sound went throbbing through Sylvie, as though all her faculties were merged into the one sense of hearing.

Honorine, bending her slender throat to glance over her shoulder at the door, exclaimed, "Stanislas, are you there?"

The Marquis de St. Amar advanced towards Sylvie and his sister, and, after greeting the former cordially, (though not with sufficient warmth to embarrass her,) saluted Ursule and Maitre Beaujeu, and entered into conversation with the latter.

Ursule was absorbed in contemplation of the full length picture of a lovely lady in court attire. She had not ventured to address Mademoiselle de St. Amar, but now inquired timidly, "Is it a portrait?"

"The portrait of my mother," replied Honorine, rising and joining her.

She suddenly remembered that she had wholly neglected Sylvie's humble *chaperone*, and endeavored to atone for her forgetfulness by pointing out and explaining the various subjects that adorned the walls.

Beaujeu also became a listener, and the Marquis approached Sylvie, who remained seated.

After one or two observations, to which she replied upon her slate, he unreflectingly, or, perhaps, because it did not seem polite to use an advantage which she did not possess, continued the interchange of remarks by writing.

The silence attracted his sister's attention, and, looking around, she saw her brother's pencil rapidly moving over the slate.

"Why, Stanislas, have you, too, lost your voice?" she saucily asked.

He answered laughingly, "Really, I almost fancied that I had, just as a deaf man shouts to his neighbor, thinking that he also cannot hear."

"Come and listen to the voices of my birds, and make Mademoiselle Sylvie acknowledge how many of her notes were stolen from them," said Honorine, throwing open the glass doors of a spacious conservatory, which more nearly resembled a garden.

The rarest floral products of all seasons had united in simultaneous bloom, and were planted in beds, intersected by winding walks. In the centre a fountain sent up, out of the mouths of glittering dolphins, jets of water that fell in a diamond shower over the figure of a shell-crowned Undine. Birds, whose green cages were concealed in the branches of oriental trees, warbled among the boughs, ignoring their captivity. At the further end, vines of the passion flower, jasmine, and clambering roses, mingling together, formed an arbor, the framework of which was invisible through its drapery of foliage and flowers. Several rustic chairs stood within the bower

"This is my study," said Honorine, "and here is my stool of instruction and repentance," she added, singling out a Lilliputian chair formed of twisted grape vines.

She motioned to Sylvie to be seated, but the enraptured girl shook her head, and stretched forth her hands towards the brilliant parterre, charmed onward by an irresistible impulse.

Honorine permitted her guest to wander about at will, while she herself flitted, with humming-bird motion, from plant to plant, rifling the choicest of their blossoms to make a bouquet.

Before it was presented to her young friend, the Marquis had gathered one sprig of heliotrope, and offered it to Sylvie, bending upon her an earnest gaze that seemed to penetrate into her very heart.

Did he mean to discover by her manner whether she remembered that he had once before placed a branch of these sweet-scented flowers in her hand? If he did, the down-dropping of her eyelids, and the sudden crimson that flashed into her cheek, and covered her very brow with its virginal veil, must have eloquently answered his inquiry.

Honorine held out the magnificent bouquet she had culled. Without lifting her eyes, Sylvie placed the heliotrope in her bosom, and took the flowers of her hostess.

Noon sounded, and Maitre Beaujeu, whose time had now become very valuable, declared that he had not another moment at his command, and they must take their leave.

"You will surely come again? Come soon, and come often," said Mademoiselle de St. Amar to Sylvie. "It will do you so much good to be imprisoned here among my birds, who will lend you the music of their voices until you regain the surpassing melody of your own. Will you not insist upon her coming frequently? and will you not accompany her, Mademoiselle Valette?" she added, addressing Ursule.

Ursule expressed her thanks for the courteous invitation by a low reverence, without trusting tongue.

"It would make me glad to come," wrote Sylvie.

"And I have a passion for making people glad; that is an additional reason why you should return soon," replied Honorine.

The Marquis handed the ladies into the carriage, but Sylvie's averted eyes were not once again raised to his. The tell-tale blush which had treacherously revealed her inmost thoughts, deepened on her cheek, beneath the gaze which she felt but could not see; an indefinable sense of shame weighed down her lids.

Once more in her secluded little chamber, she sat down and poured over the porcelain slate, reading and re-reading characters in her own and another hand writing.

"I fear it may never be restored," she had written in answer to the very natural hope expressed by the Marquis that she would shortly regain her voice.

Then followed these words in his hand: "If it should not be—if it were gone *forever*, it would still exist for me. I have never ceased to hear those marvelous tones. Has not your privation been very difficult to endure?"

The reply "very difficult," was written beneath.

Then followed, in his characters: "To those who truly value you, you must only be endeared by such a trial."

At that moment Honorine had interrupted the correspondence.

Could Sylvie efface those precious lines? No—oh no! They were too full of consolation—they inspired her with too much hope, they filled her soul with suggestions too delightfully soothing.

"Ah surely," she said, internally, "the sorest sorrow must be endurable in an atmosphere of love! I can bear mine if it endear me to others."

So argues every deeply affectionate nature—*until* the sorrow is sent!

The fresh spray of heliotrope, before its amethyst hue had begun to pale, was placed beside the withered sprig. In the narrow compass between the two, what happy memories were bounded!

Did Sylvie then presume to love the Marquis de St. Amar? She would have been startled, almost shocked, if any human being—if even that inward monitor who abruptly propounds the most searching questions, had made that inquiry.

We must plead guilty to the weakness of believing that love often leaps into existence unawares and with a first impression—at first sight—darting across the awakening soul as the first streak of light flashes over the grey sky of morning, and gives assurance of a sun behind, which, by and by, will flood the heavens with its meridian splendor. Often that first sun-ray of love illumines the horizon of maidenhood when as little is known (save by intuition) of the character, mind, and person of him whose hand kindled the prophetic flash, as Sylvie knew of the Marquis de St. Amar. The one face haunts—the voice echoes in the ears, palpitating through the spirit,—an electric thrill shoots athwart the frame at the lightest touch of that chosen one's hand,—his presence brightens all creation, and wings the heaviest hours; the pulses are attuned in harmony to the beating of his; an *internal recognition* makes the briefest acquaintance seem of long existence, and the most incomprehensible and contradictory traits, reasonable and natural. All this is very unphilosophical—very *absurd*—very!—*except* to those who have themselves experienced the sensation.

During the next six weeks Honorine constantly sent her carriage for Sylvie and Ursule, and many were the pleasant mornings they passed together.

Madame de la Tour could not be said to smile upon this singular intimacy, but she found Sylvie so gentle, lady-like and unobtrusive, and Honorine so determined in her infatuation, that she did not *yet* see sufficient cause to take the trouble of laying any of her pleasant little plots to break up their intercourse.

The Marquis was usually present, though now and then Sylvie came without his being apprized. He had introduced her to his library, and often selected choice volumes for her perusal. He was in the habit of reading aloud to his sister, and her two lowly visitors also became his auditors. Sylvie's mind was thus becoming cultivated, and her developing taste for literature strengthened every day. What a new world of thought and information was opened to her! How she longed to enjoy the full advantages of regular study! Her aptness and quickness were amazing; and Honorine, in spite of her superior acquirements, often felt that Sylvie was better able than herself to comprehend the authors with whom they were brought into communion by their self-constituted teacher of *belles lettres*.

Sylvie's health was not merely restored, but it was more firmly established than it had ever been before. Her fragile form was gradually rounding, the pallor and sallowness of her complexion had given place to a clear, creamy hue, tinged with the faintest rose; her bearing and manners became more and more polished by the delicate attrition of contact with the refined beings among whom she moved. To what good could all these captivating changes tend?

She no longer carried the little porcelain slate, from which certain characters had never been effaced. Honorine had presented her with ivory tablets, held in a cover of blue enamel, upon which the one word "Sylvie" was traced in pearls; a slender gold pencil was suspended from the finely-wrought Venetian chain to which the tablets were attached. Sylvie now always wore the chain about her neck, and the tablets in her girdle. Pencil and tablets were in frequent requisition, for her voice—alas!—that remained silent!

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

AN OLD MAID.

BY MARY ORME.

"O I think it is so horrid to be an old maid—*so* disgraceful. I mean to be married, and have a handsome husband, and an establishment. It must be delightful to have a house of one's own, and to have splendid mirrors, and elegant carpets, and rosewood furniture, and to give parties, and have beautiful dresses. Dora, dear, would not such a house be delightful?"

"I think a home of one's own *may* be delightful—may be a Paradise, and again one's home may be the reverse of all this.

"'Tis home where'er the heart is,
Where'er our loved ones dwell."

"O of course I mean to marry a man I love, if he is handsome—I would not be married and be poor—I would as soon be an old maid, tho' I think old maids are horrid things."

"Dear Miriam, you don't know what you are talking about; old maids are good, bad and indifferent, like married ladies. Which do you think is most disgraceful, to be a bad wife or a good old maid?"

"Don't ask, Dora dear. I absolutely abhor old maids. It is so disgraceful not to have plenty of lovers, and a husband at last, and an elegant home."

Isidora Maitland turned away from her friend Miriam Porter, with a hopeless feeling, which if put into words, would have been something on this wise:

"You poor, little, silly child! You have no idea what love is, or of what home and a husband should be. I pity you, but none can help you. Bitter experience must be your teacher, or you must die before you have learned the depth and value of life."

Miss Maitland was twenty-five years old—her friend Miriam was eighteen. Miriam was rich—Dora was poor, and kept school—the village school near to her widowed mother's home. She lived with her mother in their own little home, which was very humble. They had a garden, and Dora cultivated it morning and evening, and her mother, though feeble, took care of the house. A neighbor who was stronger than the Maitlands, and to whom their poverty was riches, came one day in the week to do the washing and scrubbing at the cottage.

Truly Dora Maitland knew what was the meaning of the blessed word Home, for the hearts of mother and daughter were one heart. Deeply and tenderly they loved, and there was little bitterness for them, except in the thought that one day they must part, and that most likely the dear mother would go to Heaven first. Daily their hearts were more closely united; daily the loving mother found new beauty in the daughter, and daily the young life of Isidora was more and more blest by the wisdom and sweet tenderness of her mother. It seemed impossible to both, that another love could ever come to either.

"Darling Mamma! I want no love but yours," said Isidora after the pain of parting with her father had become only a sadly tender memory. She was a blooming girl—she became a mature woman, and still this thought was a deep conviction. But what woman does not sooner or later meet her fate in a love that bows her spirit as the reed bends before the blast. She were not woman, if love were not at some time her master.

Isidora was not exempt from the common fate. When and how it met her, I have not time to tell; but she told her mother that she believed that other loves could live in her heart, and yet not intrude upon the sweet affection that united her to her only remaining parent.

"O mother, the more angels there are in the heart, the more room," said Dora, when Mrs. Maitland said, "I am sure my dear, you are getting very partial to Mr. Ellwood, and he seems to find a great many sketches about Somerville. I did not think we had material for half the pictures he has already made studies for."

"Mr. Ellwood has genius and application; I greatly prize both, dear mamma. If I were not partial to him, I should be to his pictures."

And who was the man who had made himself the arbiter of a most devoted and truthful woman's fate?

First, he is a handsome man. He is, next, a manly man in all his seeming. He stands six feet in his stockings. He has a broad chest, a deep voice, and a fine auburn beard, with hair a blacker brown He wears a slouched hat, a saque coat of delicate cloth, and a delicate drab color. His vests are faultless, and altogether he looks so carlessly elegant and so faultlessly genteel, that a girl of any ideality could not help being charmed. Then he sung like an Italian, and played the guitar like a Spanish lady.

Ellwood's pictures showed care, genius and abundant industry; two facts of great importance to Dora. She worshipped genius, she relied upon a constant application. Nothing short of persevering industry could, in her opinion, do justice to genius. Ellwood's gifts and labors then commended him to her judgment, as well as her heart. His delicate attention to herself, so frank, and free, and friendly, completed the conquest of one, whom to win, was treasure of the rarest and truest kind.

"Why should not I find a sister among all my other beauties and blessings, up here at Somerville!"

And Dora answered simply and smilingly:

"Why not?"

They lived, and moved, and had their being, in the sweet atmosphere of love. No word of the sentiment that pervaded both lives, and like a subtle alchemy melted them in one, ever escaped their lips. They lived, they loved, they were supremely happy. All things in time have an end, for the simple reason that time is not eternity. Summer ended in Somerville, but it gave place to autumn, with her brown and golden beauties, her ripe fruits, the fulfilled promise of spring and summer. The dreamy beauty of autumn passed away, and winter gave signs that his rigid reign was approaching. The time was come for Ellwood to return to the city. In his city studio he would elaborate the studies of the summer. The combined beauties of his tour would ere long live on canvas, and grace the proud homes of his patrons.

"You will write often, dear Dora," said Ellwood, cheerfully, as he took up his "traps," as he called the peripatetic instruments of his art.

"I shall always answer your letters if you write to me," said Dora.

"If I write to you," said he, laughing. "I shall have my fortune to make, but I shall write you a great many letters, though an artist's dear five hundred friends must be attended to, if he wants commissions. One has to scheme and plan, and dance attendance, and do a hundred things that one despises, to get sales and orders."

Dora's heart sunk. "I thought," said she, sadly, "that your merit would sell your pictures."

"You don't know the world, then," said Edward. "A poor artist may have genius and industry, but if he does not court society, or court and marry a rich wife, he may stay in a garret till he is old, if a crust can keep him alive long enough to allow him to grow old."

Edward Ellwood swung his sketching materials over his shoulder.

"See how primitive I am," said he. "Many a gentleman would not feel disposed to be seen carrying such a parcel on the end of his cane to the station. But I am not ashamed—I am not proud, I am only tired. I see how it is; I must marry a rich wife. What do you think of the little Miriam for an artist's wife? Her father has a pocketfull of rocks, as the city fellows say, and then she has twenty thousand from her grand-mamma. Then she is a loving little thing."

Isidora Maitland felt herself petrifying as he thus spoke. Edward Ellwood, the idol of her heart—the other half, as she felt, of her very life's life—could speak thus carelessly to her, of all that she deemed best and most sacred in art and affection.

"It is no time to jest, just as you are going away," said Dora, faintly.

"Indeed, I was never more in earnest," said he. "You don't know the life of a poor artist, my good sister. Now I can never expect to give my heart fully with my hand. I am too poor to afford such a luxury. I must get a sweet, little, inoffensive body for a wife, who will set me up all round. She must have money, position and connexions. I must do the best I can for myself. It is all well to be frank with you, Dora, for you are my sister—my darling sister," said he, taking her icy hand in his. "I know you love me as a sister would, if I had the good fortune to have one. I shall always keep this pretty ring that I stole from you," said he, looking fondly at an agate on his little finger, "and that drop of my blood that you wrung out of my heart," said he, looking at a carbuncle that he had put on Dora's finger only the evening before, "you must keep that, to remind you that you have always a friend in Edward Ellwood. I might dream of something more, but I am honorable, and tell you frankly the whole truth to begin with."

He pressed her cold hand, he kissed her forehead lightly, and he was gone. Gone! O, that he were really gone—that the heart he had so lightly won could only let him go.

"He is unworthy." The thought passed through the mind of Isidora Maitland like the death knell of hope and happiness. "Life can never be anything but bitterness to me again," said she. "How can I bear to live, and know that he is unworthy?" Then came the thought of her mother, the thought of duty, the thought of another world, where those who have nobly borne their part in this, shall have a recompense for all—all they have done, all they have suffered.

Still the agony had to be lived through, and hope and love resigned. It is one thing to wish to be resigned, and another to feel that the work is done—that the heart has given up its idols, and that the love of duty, which is another expression of the love of Heaven, is sufficient for us.

* * * * * * * * *

Years have gone by—years dark and bright; yes, for cloud and darkness are no more eternal than the brightness of earth: six years. Dora Maitland is an old maid. The dreaded limit of the thirty years is passed, and the mother and daughter still live in Somerville. A change has come over both. Mrs. Maitland has become strong and young seeming, though nearly half a century old. The daughter is thirty-one years—"an old maid," but so calmly happy—so cheerful and so active in her sphere of usefulness—that she seems ten years younger. One year after the bereavement of her heart, a heavy but sweet duty met Dora in her path of life: An elder sister, who had been some years married, died, leaving twin infants of only a few weeks old. The husband and father died at nearly the same time, bequeathing his babes, and a moderate property to Dora Maitland.

The house and grounds of Mrs. Maitland were enlarged and beautified; and the baby brother and sister grew under the fostering care they received, healthy and beautiful. Two other orphan babes found a home with the two foster mothers, the one a day, the other a week old. How blessed is the charity that wears orphan babies as its garland for God! No wonder that health and radiant happiness came to this home.

But what of Edward Ellwood and the pretty girl who thought it so horrid to be an old maid? They were married. The husband's motive was to make a "good thing" of marriage—to have a pretty, inoffensive wife, with money and friends; and the wife's motive was, to have a handsome husband, and escape being an old maid. The burdens of life fell heavily upon her, when she was all unprepared. Four feeble babies in five years, and Miriam gave up her miserable life with the last. Two of them survived the mother, and a week after her death, Isidora Maitland received the following letter from Ellwood:

"MY SISTER:—I write you by the cradle of my moaning, motherless babe. He is so ill that I hardly think he can live till morning. My little girl, who is four years old, is also very feeble. Why do I write to you, whose hands and heart are already full of the care and love that I can never give to my own poor babes. I do love them, Dora—sister; but I am a selfish man—you are a loving, devoted woman. I would ask you to take them as your own, only that I fear I am too poor. Our property has melted away. Miriam had expensive tastes, and she never received anything from her father. I will give you all I have left (I fear it will be but a few hundred dollars) with my babies, and I will bind myself to work for them as long as I live. I am not the heartless fellow I was six years ago. I have learned wisdom. I believe I have grown better in suffering. Your brother,
E. ELLWOOD.

The letter broke off abruptly. The careless tone of other days was gone, and it made its own deep impression upon Isidora Maitland. She did not write. She merely reckoned her resources, and found that her little property was sufficient to justify an addition to her family. That evening she told her mother of Edward's proposal, and the next day with a servant she went to the city. She found him in an elegant but desolate home.

"All is gone but my poor babes, and the furniture you see," said he; "but I will be your bond servant for life, if you will take them."

"As *mine*," said Dora.

"As *yours*. I will make the gift legal."

Edward Ellwood's babes were taken to Mrs. Maitland's home, and in a year they were so healthy and beautiful that they could not have been recognized.

"What a strange old maid!" said one.

"What a fine family she has!" said another.

"Old maid's children are always managed best," said a third.

But ridicule or a sense of the strangeness of her conduct, entertained by friends or others, could not rob Dora Maitland of her crown of joy.

When Ellwood came to a settlement of his affairs, and the sale of his furniture, bills from merchants and milliners took all. Not a dollar was left for his babes. But he had his genius, he had industry, and a powerful motive. He painted honest pictures, full of truth, a tender feeling for nature, and they won the hearts of buyers; and men put their hands in their pockets from a sort of invincible necessity they felt to possess such pictures.

All Isidora's babes grew, and became daily better, soul and body, under her ministrations. But no one was more truly a child, no one grew in honesty of soul, or intelligence of spirit, more surely than Edward Ellwood. His wordliness had been consumed in the fierce fire of his suffering. He devoted a prudent portion of his gains to himself, for he was a gentleman in his tastes, and all besides was devoted to what people called "the old man's family." He never felt at home except when under Mrs. Maitland's roof, and all treated him like a dear relative. All the children called him uncle Edward, but all called Dora mother. In vain she told his own little ones that they must call him papa. The elder children set the fashion and the little ones followed it.

One evening, as Ellwood sat under an arbor of climbing plants, whose blossoms exhaled sweetness, holding his babe in his arms, then more than three years old, Dora came to them.

"Does mamma love uncle Edward?" lisped the little prattler.

"Certainly," said Dora, with the frankness born of true friendship.

Ellwood raised his eyes to hers, and they were full of tears.

"I am not worthy to be loved," said he. "I never was, and never shall be."

"Few are worthy of love," said Dora. "I never heard that our good angels love us because we are worthy of their love. I would be loved, dear friend, with all my faults. If you have had faults, as who has not? you have expiated them."

"Do you really think so?" said Ellwood.

"I really think so;" and she looked into his eyes, still with the frankness of friendship.

A hopeless heartache was poor Edward's portion now, for he thought love could never live with such frankness, and his love for Dora had deepened into worship. His eyes fell beneath her clear gaze, and he said in his heart, "I will never insult her with words of love." She knew his thought. She had long known it, and she condescended to his low estate.

"Edward," said she, smiling, almost laughing at his embarrassment, "do you really want to marry an old maid with six children?"

Her words were electric. His heart leaped with inexpressible joy.

"I would sooner marry Dora with her babes, than the empress of the world," said he.

"Then we will ask mamma to let us be married," said Dora, "and I will make a law that all the children shall call you papa. 'Uncle Edward' shall be banished from Sunny Home, and Papa Ellwood shall take his place."

And so it was.

◆

THE sublimity of wisdom is to do those things living which are to be desired when dying.

EVER I HEAR IN SLEEP.

BY EMMA ALICE BROWNE.

Ever I hear, in sleep,
Thy terrible voice, oh, sea,
And it sings of a beautiful something lost,
That will never come back to me.

Thou hast pearls and gems so fair,
And shells in thy awful caves,
But the darling head of a dear one dead
Is pillowed beneath thy waves!

I know she lieth in peace
On thy treacherous, shining sand;
But, oh! for the kiss of her rose-red mouth,
And the touch of her little hand!

Thou art lavish, oh, sounding sea,
Of gifts to the wild, dim coast;
Thou strewest her strands with blushing shells,
And the glory of navies lost!

Keep all thy gems, oh sea!
And thy shells for the bright lea shore,
But give to my heart my darling's smile,
And her tender voice once more!

◆

UNFITTED FOR THE WORLD.

BY EDMUND BERKETT.

"People tell me I aint fitted for the world, and I believe they tell the truth!" exclaimed Alice Evans, with tears in her eyes. The words broke into a conversation, by no means happy, between herself and her husband.

"'Too good,' also!—don't they?" returned the husband.

"Yes! if you will have it so!"

"And you and they will have it that you are unfitted for me!—in fact, that I am not good enough for you, I suppose!"

As Henry Evans uttered these words the door opened, and Alice's uncle entered the room. Henry retreated from the room, and from his young wife, who had now fairly burst into tears.

"Hi! hi!" exclaimed Uncle Thomas, who was a great favorite of Alice's, and between whom and herself a deep and sincere affection existed. "I didn't know you had such storms in your house! What's all this about?"

"Henry doesn't love me!" returned Alice, with the handkerchief still to her eyes.

"What?

"I'm tired of life!"

"Alice!"

"I aint fitted for it."

"Aint fitted for it! Pray tell me wherein?"

"I don't know, unless it's what they say it is."

"What's that? and who are *they?*"

"They say I'm too delicate—and too spiritual—and—and—too good. And they are my friends," answered Alice, beginning to wipe her eyes.

"They are your enemies!" exclaimed Uncle Thomas.

"Uncle!"

"You are selfish."

Alice flushed to her tearful eyes; and decided anger began to be depicted on her countenance.

"Uncle Thomas! This from you!"

"I repeat it! You are selfish—excessively selfish!—and tyrannical—very!"

This was too much. Alice again burst into a flood of tears; and Uncle Thomas plainly perceived that he had deeply injured her feelings. He said nothing, however, but waited until her weeping had died away into occasional sobs. Then he again addressed her:

"Alice," he said, in a calm, kind voice.

Alice, who was now somewhat exhausted, said nothing, but raised her eyes furtively to his.

"Alice," he again said, with an utterance still more kind. "Do you doubt *my* love for you?"

A tear or two gathered on her lids.

"No," she faltered, in a choked voice.

"Then may I say a few words to you?" he continued.

"If you won't call me selfish any more," she returned, a painful smile mingling with the distressed expression of her countenance.

"I cannot promise but that I may be obliged to say you are selfish, but I promise to do so as gently as possible, my dear Alice," answered Uncle Thomas, pleasantly.

"Well, you may speak. But, oh, don't call me selfish in the tone you used just now," said Alice, earnestly.

"This I promise most willingly. And now I will say again, that those people who tell you you are unfitted for this world, and that you are too good for it, are your enemies—your worst enemies."

"They certainly wish me well."

"This may be perfectly true; and yet they are doing you great harm—more harm than they or you can immediately realize. They are encouraging and increasing within you mistaken notions of yourself, which exert a most baneful influence on your character.

"Mistaken notions?"

"Be patient, and you shall hear what I mean, my little niece. You have been led to mistake very selfish, for spiritual characteristics. You have indulged a morbid sensitiveness, until it has made you miserable, and then you take your misery as proof that you are not naturally fitted for this world. You have been made exacting by it, and by this means you are called too good for the world."

"How can that be?" inquired Alice, with considerable surprise.

"I will tell you," answered Uncle Thomas. "Your friends generally only see your virtues; and so your sensitive and exacting character seems to them to be added to those virtues, making you much too good for the rough world. Now they should be subtracted instead of added; for they are making you too bad for the world—not too good for it. What do you suppose your husband is thinking of you at this instant?" added Uncle Thomas, abruptly.

Alice blushed crimson, but said nothing for a little while. "Your remark about my sensitive and exacting character, as you call it, I do not quite understand," she at length said.

"Well, well, I will endeavor to make it a little plainer. Listen carefully. You have really an intense desire to lead a virtuous life. And you desire to appear good. As I before said, your friends generally see this desire as your all in all, and so when you manifest your extreme sensitiveness, and exacting nature, they take it all to be entirely in behalf of virtue. So when these characteristics render you unhappy, they say—'She is too sensitive to virtue. She is too good.' Do you understand me now?"

"I do," was the answer.

"Now it is an utter mistake, my child. Far from your sensitive and exacting nature being the result of sensitiveness to virtue, it is the result of a most morbid selfishness. It results from an extreme love of approbation, and an insidious vanity.

"I do not feel that I have vanity, Uncle Thomas."

"Your very words prove how false are your feelings; for there is no person more filled with vanity than he who thinks he has none. Now, here is your trouble, Alice: You allow people to influence you because you are vain——"

"But I do not think I am too good because they say so; and I chide them for speaking to me thus."

"Your chiding is honest enough, my child; but your actions tell that the essense of their words is borne about in your heart. I say again—you allow people to influence you because you are vain—you allow yourself to become morbidly sensitive on account of your extreme sensitiveness to the opinions of others—and you are exacting simply because you are selfish. And this is the case with hundreds of others who are pronounced too delicate in mind, and too spiritual for this world, and unfitted for it, because possessing a nature above it."

"You want to make me out a very bad woman, Uncle Thomas!" exclaimed Alice, threatening again to return to her tears. "I should like to know what you find about me to love, if I'm so wicked!"

"There, Alice! I'll judge you by that remark. The most stubborn school-girl could not have displayed a greater determination not to understand the true spirit of a rebuke, and to pervert, in her mind, what has been said to her. You say I want to make you out a very bad woman, and you wonder what I can find about you to love, if you are such a bad woman. What do you suppose your husband is thinking of you at this instant?" again abruptly asked Uncle Thomas.

Again Alice blushed crimson. "I don't pretend to know!" she exclaimed, with more of a testy expression than she would like to have used in her uncle's presence. "I cannot help it!" she added, on meeting his reproving glance. "Henry isn't as he used to be. I don't think we are adapted to each other, Uncle Thomas."

"Cant! cant! my little niece! Don't be led away by those nice sounding words. 'I don't think we are adapted to each other' are convenient words to excuse much remissness of duty on the part of wives, and husbands too. It's a sad fact, my dear, that many a married couple are ill adapted to each other. But, my dear Alice, don't, I beg you, turn a truth into a cant phrase to creep away upon. If you are not suited to each other, do you expect your husband is to subdue all his faults, while you are indulging your very worst ones? You say, Alice, that Henry isn't as he used to be. You mean by that, I suppose, that he does not seem to love you as formerly."

Alice slightly nodded her head, and at the same time drew a long sigh.

"I don't wonder at it, my girl, I don't wonder at it," said Uncle Thomas. "So long as you stand off and scrutinize him, and analyze him, and complain, and act as though you thought he was of the earth, earthy, and yourself of heaven, heavenly, you cannot expect him to throw his arms about you as in times gone by, and treat you with all those affectionate endearments, which no doubt made you happy enough then. If you want him to be to you as of old, throw your heart sheer into his, and make him feel that you wish to see as little of his faulty nature as possible. But if you wish him to remain as he now is, why, mourn in his ears, be ready to notice every little thing that isn't quite up to your ideas of propriety, and if you think him a little cold towards you, tell him of it every day; make him realize how ill-suited he is as a husband—especially as a husband to you, so sensitive and so high-minded—and how unhappy he makes you by his fancied rudeness, and how often he shocks your sensibilities! Do all this, as you have been doing for the last twelve months, and my word for it, Alice, you will not only keep him as he is now, but make him gradually worse! Understand me. I do not urge you to simper around him, and carry matters so far the other way that he will cry out, 'O, don't be so soft!' What I urge is, that you treat him with true, dignified, and yet whole-souled and wifely love. Follow my advice, my darling, and you will, ere the expiration of six months, have reason to thank your uncle Thomas for calling you hard names."

Uncle Thomas delivered this long harangue with considerable excitement, and through it all Alice's eyes remained fastened to his. But when he closed, his excitement was somewhat abated, and she then dropped her eyes, and he could see that each one of them was filling again. Hastily embracing her, he imparted upon her cheek a hearty kiss, and then, with a "God bless you, my dear little pet!" he took his hat, and left the room.

Dear reader, we will not intrude into her presence, as Alice remains alone communing with her own thoughts.

That night, Henry was away for the first time since they were married, when she could not tell where he might be found. He returned in the early morning, not long after midnight, already repenting of his behavior, but, thank God! free from the fumes of alcohol, to find his young wife lying on her bed, in her day apparel, in a high fever. The incidents of the day, together with the fearful suspense caused by his absence, had proved too much for a constitution not naturally strong.

Henry was frightened. He hastily made Alice as comfortable as possible, and then ran for the doctor. When the physician arrived he pronounced her seriously but not dangerously ill. He thought that within eight or ten days she would be able to attend again to her household duties. The medicine he left proved efficacious, and by sunrise she was considerably improved. Yet for days she was obliged to keep to her bed.

What passed through her mind on those days God only knows. The hours spent on a sick-bed are ever pregnant with sober and improving thought. But Alice had more than the usual influences of a sick-bed to cause her to meditate. The words of her uncle had sunk deep into her heart; and now she revolved them over and over again in her mind. Good Uncle Thomas often visited her, never coming without some little delicacy for his "sick little Alice," and his presence but served to deepen the tone of her meditations.

At length on the evening of the fifth day, Henry was about leaving the room, after tenderly arranging everything for her comfort, in order that she might be alone for a short time, such having often been her desire since she was taken ill, when she called him to her side.

"Henry," said she, with a voice touching from its very weakness, "you have been very kind to me."

Henry tried to speak, but before he could master his throat sufficiently to do so, she again addressed him:

"Henry," she said, reaching forth her hand, which he instantly pressed with a feeling which spoke better than could his words; "Henry, I want to ask you to forgive me."

He grasped her hand more closely—so closely that it gave her pain. Dropping it quickly, he exclaimed, impulsively:

"I'm a rough fellow for such as you, Alice!"

She again took his hand, while her eyes became suffused with a glistening moisture.

"Henry," she repeated, "I want to ask you to forgive me. I have wronged you very much."

"No, no!" uttered Henry, with a swallow in his throat, and with his lips and lids trembling; "I have been rude and hard to you, Alice; and I'm going to do better after this. I've thought it all over since you've been sick. You've been an angel to me, Alice, and I haven't anything to forgive."

"You have not wronged me as much as I have wronged you, Henry," persisted Alice, her voice now beginning to tremble. "I have thought it all over, too; and I want you to forgive me."

"God bless you, Alice! If you've wronged me, I forgive you a hundred times over!" uttered Henry, now completely giving way.

"Kiss me."

He bent over the bed. At that moment the rising moon looked in at the window, and as she threw her light over the forms of the forgiven wife and the forgiven husband, it seemed like a holy benediction from Heaven. A few moments the beam moved over them, and then disappeared, leaving them alone in the solemn dimness of evening.

* * * * * *

Four years subsequent to the incidents I have related, two men were leisurely conversing by a garden gate.

"Which do you consider the happiest home in our neighborhood?" inquired one.

"That," answered the other, pointing to a cottage some fifteen rods distant, on the opposite side of the road.

"I agree with you."

It was the home of Henry and Alice Evans.

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THE WHALEMAN'S STORY.

AN EXCITING RACE.

BY DR. S. COMPTON SMITH.

The following story was told me by Captain Brayman, an old sailor of 40 years' standing:

"In the summer of '25," the captain began, "I returned from the Pacific with a full cargo of sperm oil, enough, in fact, to make all my owners rich, for in those days they hadn't invented 'gas,' and whiskey, and turpentine, and 'fluid' and them new-fangled lights. 'Ile was ile,' as the Nantucket folks used to say, and the whaling business wasn't overdone, as it has been since.

"Well, I reckoned on a good cruise on shore for a few weeks, before I should make another voyage. But I was mistaken; for hardly had we let go anchor, when the agent came on board, and said he:

"'Captain Brayman, I'm glad to see you. We've got a fine new ship all ready for you. We've only been waiting for your return to take charge of her. There she is, sir, as fine a vessel as was ever fitted out of this harbor,' and he pointed to a large, noble-looking craft as ever floated on them waters.

"The fact is, the ship just filled my eye, and in less than a week I was sailing out of the harbor again, on board the A No. 1 coppered and copper fastened ship Samson, of Nantucket, once more bound on a whaling cruise in the south seas. That was the best voyage I ever made, for she was the luckiest ship I ever commanded.

"But to my story.

"We had doubled the Horn, and touched at Callao for supplies, and when about ten days to the westward of that port, while running free before the southeast trades, the lookout from aloft shouted, 'Sail ho!'

"'Where away?' I asked.

"'Off the weather bow, sir, and yonder's another, directly ahead.'

"'What do they look like?'

"'They're blubber hunters, sir, and the fellow ahead's trying out,' was the answer.

"'Signal them, Mr. Coffin,' said I to the first officer. Maybe they're some of our Nantucket or New Bedford boys; if so, we've letters for them.'

"The order was obeyed; but the strangers proved to be, one an Englishman and the other a Frenchman.

"'Keep a bright lookout there aloft! do you hear! Don't let them fellows sight the first spouter!'

"'Aye, aye, sir!'

"This was early in the morning, just as the sun was waking up from his watery bed. We had gained upon the ship ahead; while the chap on our weather bow had changed his course a little, and was bearing down upon us, evidently with a desire to communicate.

"Just as I came up from breakfast, the man aloft again hailed—but this time it was the welcome and exciting cry of:

"'*There—she—blows!*'

"Scarcely had the sound reached the deck, than Coffin and myself were in the rigging; and there, off our starboard bow, about equal distance from the three ships, a large, ball-headed bull-whale had just shown himself. The two strangers had also sighted the fish at the same moment, and their boats were in the water as soon as ours.

"The breeze was light, and before the ships had been brought to, all was ready for the chase. I knew there was fun ahead; and fortunately for me, it was my turn in the leading boat.

"'Now, boys!' I shouted, 'away with a will—don't let John Bull or Johnny Crapo get the start of us!—away my hearties!'

"The men laid themselves to the work with all their might; and away we flew in pursuit of the whale. I thought I had the best boat's crew that ever sprung ash timber,—and indeed I had; but the boats of the Englishmen were rapidly coming up to the whale, which at the time was going slowly through the water, right away from us, and obligingly across the course of the Englishmen; while the Frenchmen, straining every muscle, and shouting with excitement, were not far behind.

"'Pull my hearties!—pull!—never let it be said that John Bull ever took a blubber horse from a Yankee crew!—spring to your oars!'—I yelled.

"And giving one hearty 'hurra!' the men redoubled their exertions, till the light boats leaped from wave to wave, like a school of flying fish. Our own three boats were side by side, and kept this position all the while. But the Englishman's leading boat carried two more oars than ourselves, besides being of a lighter build, and in spite of us was going on the whale.

"It was a beautiful sight, nine well manned boats, skimming, with the speed of sea-gulls, over the crested waves, and all converging to the same point; while every soul on board of them was wild with the excitement of the race.

"On we flew, the Englishman having decidedly the advantage; for, as I said before, the whale was crossing his track; and was now almost within casting distance. The boat stearer had dropped his oar and catching his harpoon, stood ready for a throw.

"'Pull! pull! my men!' I shouted, 'for the honor of old Nantucket! for God's sake don't let that fellow get the first fast!' and springing to my feet I poised the iron over my head; but too late for a throw! The Englishman's harpoon whizzed through the air, only, however, to graze the enormous flukes of the great monster, as they disappeared beneath the waves.

"He had sounded; and the next instant we flew over the spot where he had gone down, and crossing each others wake and course, became closely mingled together—Yankees, Englishmen and Frenchmen, all within arm's-length of each other. And then such a chorus of 'hurras!' and 'vivas!' as rose from them nine boat's crews was never heard before. The sound reached the crews remaining on board the ships, and:

"'Hurrah! hurrah! viva!' was answered back again to us on the heaving waters.

"'We missed him that time, my Yankee friend!' shouted the English boat steerer to me. But blast my hi, if that ere blubber 'orse breaks water agin he's hours.'

"'It may be so, neighbor,' I replied, 'but I doubt it mightily. The British harpoon haint been forged yet that'll take the wind out of a Nantucket iron, I guess.'

"And thus keeping up a good-natured badinage, we lay side and side, waiting for the reappearance of the whale, who, we knew, must finish his spouting before making his final soundings.

"I hadn't then been a whaler for rising of ten years not to know enough of the habits of the sperm whale, to tell how long he would be down to a minute. So we lay on our oars, all the time keeping our eye on the other boats, to prevent their getting a foot the start of us; while with the others we watched patiently for the re-appearance of our game.

"At length, after an hour and ten minutes had passed, and all hands were sweeping the sea with their eyes, in eager expectation of the whale's breaking cover, he appeared once more, spouting the brine in fine style, about half a mile to the leeward; and away we all dashed again in hot pursuit, the English boats having again the advantage, as they had ranged in a line on our starboard side, which brought us astern of them on the start.

"The sea hissed on our cutwaters as if they were red hot iron, and some of the boats appeared to be actually lifted quite clean from the water, from the power of the strong rowers; and, in spite of the extra oars of the Englishmen, we had the satisfaction of seeing that we were at least their equal in speed.

"In the meantime, while John Bull and Jonathan were laying ourselves out to our best advantage, Mons. Crapo was by no means idle. His light boats were propelled in gallant style, and flew over the waves beam and beam with ours.

"Bull, however, had the lead, and with his characteristic bull-dog determination, meant to keep it. The same boat that had thrown the iron overboard was about two lengths ahead of the others, and almost within darting distance; in two more strokes, in fact, she would have been upon the whale; but just at that moment, to my excessive delight, I will acknowledge it, up went his great flukes again, and the giant of the ocean once more disappeared from sight.

"Another hour and ten minutes we lay upon our oars, and watched for his return; and when again he came to the surface, he was still farther off than at first, but nearer our own ship.

"While the whale was making this last soundings, the English boats had drifted more to leeward than ours, while the Frenchman, keeping his boats together, retained about the same relative position with us. This again brought the Englishmen between us and the chase.

"'Now, my hearties!' I shouted to my men; 'once more, my hearties! It's this time or never! Run them fellows under, or splinter the tough ash!'

"'Aye, aye, captain!' they all answered. 'That fish is ours!' and once more the boats flew over the brine.

"Still ahead, the English boats were rapidly gaining, when the whale appearing to be 'gallied,' threw up great puffs of water, and raising his enormous hulk of a head upon the surface, increased his speed and was flying along quite as fast as the boats. But suddenly, as if alarmed at the foremost boat, he changed his course, and making the white bubble roll like drifting snow from his glistening back, down he came 'on the wind,' now making ours the leading boats.

"As if satisfied that, by this manœuvre, he had eluded his pursuers, the great monster slackened his speed, and was soon moving as leisurely as at first.

"Without losing a moment, we were headed for him, as were also the other boats; but Jonathan now led the van; and straining our muscles to their utmost tension, dashed in a line towards the fish. In another moment we would have been fast. But just then the whale, who was an old customer, and seemed to be gifted with extraordinary cunning, once more changed his tack, and running again 'off the wind,' gave the other six boats slightly the advantage.

"Once more the chase became exciting, the whale running just fast enough to keep out of danger. I knew this state of the chase could not last much longer; and once more encouraged the crews of my boats to do their utmost. Nobly the boys responded, and now without uttering a word, they made the briny spray fly from their oars. Away we flew again, the Englishman's boats leading.

"Again the whale slackened his speed, and once more we gained rapidly upon him. From some cause, I never knew what, except that the men were wearying of the long pull, the English boats did not fly over the water with the rapidity they had maintained up to this moment; and we now began to overhaul them. We had reached within a boat's length of them, when, once more urged on by their boat-steerers, they lay to their oars, and came up to the whale, and the foremost harpooner, leaping to his feet, cast the barbed iron into the air with all the force he could muster. In another second it would have been buried deeply into the thick blubber, but just then I heard a rushing, whizzing sound over my head, and then the glaring of an iron flashed by me, followed by the swift passage of a line, and I saw the Englishman's harpoon fall harmless into the sea.

"Gib. Richmond, the steerer of my second boat, than whom no man living had a quicker eye, or truer aim, as well as strength of arm, seeing the desperate state of the game, had cast his iron over the heads of all of us, and across the line of the Englishman's harpoon, thus turning the instrument from its direct course.

"At the same instant the brave fellow, with the utmost coolness and presence of mind, shouted to me:

"'Now let him have it, Captain Brayman!'

"Quick as thought I acted on the suggestion and snatched up my own iron, and springing upon a thwart, hurled it with all my might—right over the heads of the Englishmen—through the black, glistening hide of the huge monster. *My iron was fast!*

"'Stern all!' I cried, as the immense creature almost flew out of the water from the sting of the barb, and throwing tons of water about him, filled the English boats, and threatened in his angry struggles to dash them into splinters.

"'Stern all!' and heaving away, the line flew like lightning from the tub, making the gunwale smoke with the intense friction.

"Once more a wild 'huzza!' accompanied with cheering 'vivas!' rang out over the waters, and was echoed by the Samson's people, who had witnessed the whole affair; but not a sound was heard from the English boats. They were too intent upon getting out of the vicinity of the floundering monster, when, crestfallen, and uttering contemptuous growlings against the 'bloody Yankees,' they returned sullenly to their ship, which seeing them on board, bore away on her course.

"Not such, however, was the conduct of the Frenchmen. They good-naturedly staid with us, and assisted with their irons, till Mr. Richmond, with his lance, gave the whale his death-stab, when the mighty leviathan, with his life blood spouting red and hot from his great nostril, went into his 'flurry,' and beating the waves of old ocean into foam, soon floated a huge carcass, at the mercy of his tiny conquerors.

"That old fellow was the largest sperm whale I ever saw, and furnished us more oil than any other three we took during that cruise—and I assure you, my lad, none of them were calves."

WIT AND WISDOM.

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED—PREPARED EXPRESSLY FOR THE LEDGER BY GEO. D. PRENTICE.

THE child on whom heaven has bestowed the gift of genius, wanders forth into the fields and woods, an embodied imagination; an elemental being, yearning for something high, but knowing not its mission. A powerful destiny heaves for development in its bosom; it feels the prophetic wave surging to and fro; but all is indistinct and vast—caverned, spell-bound, aimless, and rife with sighs.

THEY who carry nothing but the fire-brand and the sword imprint deep marks of their existence for a period in the burning and bloody furrows of their course; but healing time closes them up and covers them with verdure: men keep no memory of those who brought them only evil; the exterminators perish in as deep oblivion as their victims.

THE memories of the loved and lost steal upon us as "the sweet south upon a bed of violets;" they come like the breath from the gates of heaven's bowers, left ajar when they entered.

TO enjoy the society of a friend, we should limit our intercourse with him. We have pushed our companionship too far when we feel ourselves sharing each other's dullness.

HE is an ill-natured fellow who thinks it the only justification of early marriages, that hardships borne in early life fit us to endure them with serenity in after years.

MANY, who feel very rich when tempted to buy some unnecessary thing to gratify vanity, experience a painful sense of poverty when called upon to give.

THE use we make of our fortune determines its sufficiency. A little is enough if used wisely—too much if used foolishly.

AT first the dissipated resort to wine to stimulate their wits, and in the end have to resort to their wits to procure their wine.

THOSE who cry loudest "look out for deceit," might for the most part be properly told in reply, "look *in* for deceit."

IN the "economy of nature" we often find the wildest profusion; and so we do in the boasted economy of some people.

A CHEERFUL heart is the richest of human treasures, for even gold shines more brightly in the smiles of the sun.

A RICH man, without the capacity for intellectual enjoyment, is as poor as the most humble laborer who lives under the shadow of palaces.

WHY did you retreat in the face of the enemy? You see, sir, I have got a retreating nose, and of course I have to follow it.

THE poor can gaze at and enjoy the splendor of the rich, but they are generally obliged in return to pay their taxes for them.

THE cradle is the little pilot-boat of humanity—wherein the young navigator on the sea of life takes passage.

LOVERS exist in each other. Thus true lovers are never parted.

YOU cannot preserve happy domestic pairs in family jars.

IN the game of life men most frequently play the knave, and women the deuce.

WHEN colors are costly, prudes can't afford to blush for their erring sisters.

FAITH is the angel that leads Religion through the dark by the light of her wings.

WHEN you tell your secret it is *going*—and so it will probably be *kept*.

NO man ever professed to contemn women till he was conscious of their contempt.

POLITICIANS by trade should be confined to unseasoned dishes, for they don't earn their salt.

OF all the climes of earth, the torrid zone bears the palm.

SWEET blue eyes are the violet-blossoms of the soul.

SOLEMN gravity is often a deceitful trick to gain credit of the world for more sense than a man has

THE human soul, like the water of the salt sea, becomes fresh and sweet in rising to the sky.

NO one can look on a fashionable woman's figure now-a-days and say that figures won't lie.

A GOOD man is kinder to his enemy than bad men are to their friends.

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CURRENT ITEMS.

A HACK-DRIVER in Chicago having got an old lady for a passenger, who wished to go to a place that was but a few squares off, told her the place of her destination was four miles distant, made the old lady pay him three dollars in advance, and then drove her around the city for half an hour before setting her down before her niece's door. The latter, hearing what fare had been paid, requested the hackman to put the baggage in a dark room, and, when he had entered, locked him in, and would not let him out till he had refunded $2.50 by slipping the amount under the door.

A BAND of drunken Indians, a short time ago, surrounded the cabin of an old hunter, situated on the western border of Missouri, and threatened to kill him and his wife and children, unless he would let them into his abode and give them whatever they wanted; but the old frontiersman barred his door, and ordered them off; whereupon a fight ensued, which continued until seven of the savages were shot, when the survivors fled.

ONE night, not long ago, a Mexican went to a house in New Orleans, and demanded money of a woman living there, threatening to cut her throat if she refused; whereupon she called for assistance, and a man coming to her aid was attacked by the Mexican, who stabbed him three times, but the new-comer, notwithstanding his wounds, killed his assailant.

A PAPER-MAKER, named Kilmer, went down the race, one day recently, to examine the wheel of his mill, at Rock Mills, N. Y., and slipping on the ice, he was caught on the cog gearing, and his body cut entirely in two, the severed halves floating out upon the waste water.

A RECENT school report states the average annual cost of educating each pupil in the public schools of different cities, to be as follows: Philadelphia $9; Baltimore $10.82; Chicago $12.93; Buffalo $13.93; New York $15.33; Boston $15.91; Cincinnati $16.96; St. Louis $17.34.

TWO boys, living in Marshfield, Vt., lately got into a severe snow-balling contest, which, waxing warmer and warmer, they began to throw pieces of ice; and finally becoming enraged, they closed, and one stuck his jack-knife into the other's side.

AN old woman while engaged in mopping the floor of a room in the Capitol, at Washington, the other day, found a pocketbook containing several thousands of dollars, and hunting up the owner, she restored it to him, and received $5 for her honesty and trouble.

THE body of a child was found one morning, a short time since, in a wood pile, in St. Louis, nearly devoured by rats. On examination, it was discovered that the child had been murdered before the body was thrown into the wood pile.

AN old woman in Philadelphia, ninety-three years of age, and very infirm, got out of bed one evening lately to warm herself by the fire, and was found in the morning by her daughter lying on the hearth and burned to a crisp.

THE wife of a farmer living near Prarie du Chien, while milking a cow one morning, a short time since, was attacked by an unruly ox, and injured so severely that it was thought she could not recover.

A CORRESPONDENT, writing from Pike's Peak, states that a fight had recently occurred in that vicinity between two squads of miners, in which one was killed and several others severely wounded.

A WASHERWOMAN, while washing a dress for a lady up town recently, stuck a needle that was in the garment into the ball of her thumb, where it broke off, and the next day she died of the lockjaw.

AS a gentleman was passing along South street, one evening recently, he was attacked by a couple of ruffians dressed in sailor clothes, knocked down, and robbed of a gold watch and sixty dollars in money.

A COUPLE of men were attacked, a short time since, by a large panther, on Bayou Codra, Miss. One of the men being armed with an ax, and the other being plucky, they killed the panther after a desperate fight.

A LAWYER of Port Huron, Mich., became insane recently on account of "spiritualism," the doctrines of which he had been investigating, and shot himself.

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ROBERT BONNER, Editor and Proprietor.

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PLAIN ENGLISH.

It is the opinion of many classical scholars in this country and in England that a knowledge of Greek and Latin is essential to a clear understanding of our vernacular. With due deference to the learned pundits who take this ground, it is untenable. It is possible to speak and write pure, vigorous, and even elegant English, without being able to read Homer, Virgil, Cicero or Thucydides, in the original. The truth is, that persons whose lives have been chiefly devoted to the study of the dead languages, rarely express themselves forcibly and effectually in their mother tongue. Few English words derived from the Greek and Latin have precisely the same meaning as the roots from which they originated. Some of them have a conventional signification to which the derivatives afford no adequate clue, and in these cases a reference to classical dictionaries would mislead instead of enlightening the English student. The true and only way of arriving at a correct knowledge of the meanings and powers of English words of exotic origin, is to ascertain their conventional acceptation and application. No matter from what language they may have been adopted, their *anglicized*, not their foreign meanings, are mainly important to the pupil.

No foreign auxiliaries, ancient or modern, are needed in the study of the English tongue. It is at once the most precise and the most expressive of languages, and is equally suited to every style of composition. Simplicity, force and beauty are its elements, and it is richly worthy of the most careful study for its own intrinsic excellence. If all the works of the ancients should be consumed to-morrow, and their very names be forgotten, the Anglo-Saxon tongue, the grandest, the richest, the most fervid and emphatic ever spoken by man, could be as thoroughly acquired and as correctly written and uttered as it is now.

Without intending to underrate the classical dialects of antiquity, we cannot help thinking that too close an acquaintance with them (or indeed with any foreign language) tends to vitiate and corrupt one's style of writing and speaking. Gibbon, the historian, states in his memoirs, that his English was "corrupted by the use of a foreign idiom" during his residence in Switzerland. Dr. Johnson condemns the phraseology of the learned Sir Thomas Browne as a "mixture of heterogeneous words," as "learned but pedantic; deep but obscure." Browne understood six languages, yet he never wrote a lucid sentence in his own vernacular. Milton's prose, with its profusion of Latinisms, its involved syntax, and long-winded sentences, is positively a bore. The poet-statesman seems to have taken infinite pains to obscure his noble ideas in a fog of verbiage. Locke, who was a sound thinker and a clear writer, objects to the making of Latin themes by the English scholar, forasmuch as he may never have occasion to utter a Latin speech as long as he lives. In his Essay on the Human Understanding—a work too little read in these days, this great authority in matters of education has the following pertinent remarks, which we commend to the consideration of all students who wish to become masters of the English language, "pure and undefiled."

"To write and speak correctly gives a grace, and gains a favorable attention, to what one has to say; and since it is *English* that an English gentleman will have constant use of, *that* is the language he should chiefly cultivate, and wherein most care should be taken to polish and perfect his style. To speak or write better *Latin* than English, may make a man be talked of; but he would find it more to his purpose to express himself well in his own tongue, that he uses every moment, than to have the vain commendation of others for a very insignificant quality."

Simply because Addison wrote genuine English, he was sneered at as "no great scholar" by the pedants of his age, and even at this day, people who ought to know better, consider a college education indispensable for all who aspire to become men of mark in society, or to reach eminence in any professional pursuit. The solid mind of Dr. Johnson—himself a profound classical scholar—rejected this sort of humbug with contempt and disdain. "A mixture of two languages," he says, "will produce a third, distinct from both; and they will always be mixed, where the chief part of education, and the most conspicuous accomplishment, is skill in ancient or in foreign tongues."

Let it not be inferred, however, that we are opposed to the acquisition of foreign languages, or of the obsolete dialects. A knowledge of French, Spanish and German, may be useful to the merchant, and an acquaintance with Greek and Latin necessary to the professional man. But to seven-eighths of the American people these accomplishments, however agreeable, are certainly not indispensable, while, on the other hand, a sound and thorough English education is necessary to every man who expects to wield influence and command respect in an American community. First the *essential*, then the *ornamental, if convenient*. But, above all, let it be remembered that the independent cultivation of our mother tongue—apart from all classical resources—is the only means by which it is possible to acquire the art of speaking and writing *plain English*.

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But one false step, one wrong habit, one corrupt companion, one loose principle, may wreck all your prospects, and all the hopes of those who love you.

THE SORROWS OF POOR YOUNG MEN.

Young men who are employed in great establishments, at moderate salaries, often feel discouraged by the seeming impossibility of their ever getting into business. They argue thus with themselves, and with us sometimes in dolorous letters: "To carry on this business with effect requires a capital of one hundred thousand dollars; how is it possible for a young fellow, with a salary of five or six hundred dollars a year, to save a tenth part of that sum?" They answer that it is impossible, and hence conclude that it is the unalterable decree of fate, that they must remain hireling drudges all the days of their lives. This reasoning appears to come home with withering power to the minds of young gentlemen, who have had the luck to fall desperately in love with a pretty girl. Out of every hundred letters that we receive, at least ten are from young men of ardent feelings and small incomes, who are dead in love and have no prospect of an advance, and who would like to be informed whether it is the part of wisdom to go to South America and make a rapid fortune in the coffee trade, or marry at home and live in a garret, or lay themselves and their sorrows at the bottom of their native river, having previously tied a brick-bat to each wrist; and if none of these are wise, then what do we recommend?

These ardent youths overlook a fact with which they are perfectly familiar, namely, that the very men whom they serve, and whose fortune seems so unattainable, began life just as *they* are beginning it, at the bottom of the ladder. With a few well known exceptions, all the great factories, commercial firms, newspapers, private banking-houses, retail stores, in the cities of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cincinnati, and Baltimore, are, at this moment, owned and conducted by men who began their career in poverty, and whose prospects, during their youth and early manhood, were quite as disheartening as those of any of our love-lorn correspondents. And with regard to that delusive dream of emigrating to some other State or country, we can assure our young friends, that the conditions of prosperity in every land are the same. The one source of prosperity, at all times and in all places, is this: *Industry directed by Intelligence.*

Nevertheless, emigration is frequently the direct means of a man's improving his fortune. That man does well to emigrate, who can take with him gifts, qualities and accomplishments, that abound in the place where he is, and are scarce in the place where he intends to go. An Irish laborer is wise to emigrate to America, because Ireland has more muscle than she can employ, and America not as much. He leaves a glut and comes to a scarcity; and, accordingly, he can sell his strength in America for a dollar a day, which in Ireland only brought him thirty cents. The Huguenots did well in England, because they carried thither a *skill* in the finer manufactures, which was unknown in the island before. They took root and flourish in England to this day. And, doubtless, a young American, well versed in commercial knowledge, perfectly acquainted with the Spanish language, temperate, active and enterprising, could do well in such countries as Cuba and Brazil, where activity and intelligent enterprise do not abound. This is the law of successful emigration: To leave a place where there are too many like yourself, and go to a place where such persons as you are are in demand.

We would again remind our longing young friends, that the real capital of a great business is *not* money, but intellect. This is the corner stone of our political economy. The degree of intelligence with which a business is conducted is the measure of its permanent prosperity. Millions of capital cannot save it, if there is a fool in the counting-room, who exercises control. This fundamental business truth is not often acknowledged in so many words, but it is constantly acted upon in the sure and rapid promotion of young men who show that they possess a decided talent for business. The best head tends upward by a law as sure as gravitation. That best head may be, to-day, in the basement, officiating as water bearer and errand boy to the packers. We look in, next year, and find him the foreman of that department; and so he marches upward through all the gradations, until he lands safe and sound in the counting-room as junior partner.

But we had no intention of discoursing at large on this interesting subject. We merely wished to say, that, though appearances are sometimes against the remark, it is nevertheless true, that a man generally gets on in life as fast as he becomes fit to be entrusted with the more difficult duties that belong to superior station. And nowhere is this so generally true as in the business world.

FASHIONABLE GOLD.

What is to be done with all the gold? political economists have anxiously inquired. Gold from California; gold from Australia; gold from Pike's Peak; gold turning up everywhere; besides the old gold of Russia, India and South America. There really seemed to be danger that gold would become so common as to render it necessary for mankind to hold a convention and fix upon some other substance as a representative of value, and a medium of exchange. But the ladies have come to the rescue. Fashion has taken up the difficulty. The decree has gone forth: Let gold be worn on every visible article of ladies' costume! How prompt ladies are to obey a mandate of this kind, is well known. We now see gold in every form, and on everything; gold tassels, gold rope; gold bordering, gold sprigs, gold flowers, gold buttons, gold buckles, gold belts, gold on the bonnet, gold on the dress, gold on the cloak; gold, gold, everywhere gold. This is comforting as well as pretty. California is safe; Australia need not be alarmed; and Mr. Pike may rest assured of the upward tendency of his distinguished Peak.

CHEATING US OF OUR SNOW.

The snow-king treats this slip of a Manhanttan Island rather unfairly. Plenty of snow ten miles north of the City Hall, plenty of snow in New Jersey, plenty of snow on Long Island; but here, just here, where a little snow is so keenly appreciated, we can seldom get enough for six hours' consecutive sleighing. The marvel is, that, though we have not, on an average, more than one hundred hours of good sleighing per annum, so many magnificent sleighs should be kept. No sooner does the sleighing become tolerable, than the whole Island, from the Battery to Harlem, resounds with sleigh-bells. No father of a family appears to feel that he has done his duty until he has his whole family bundled into a sleigh, and out upon the Bloomingdale Road. Considering the passion we all have for this kind of locomotion, it is really "too bad," as the boys say, that in the western part of the State they should have three months of excellent sleighing, and we only three days.

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To one who said, "I do not believe there is an honest man in the world," another replied, "It is impossible that one man should know all the world, but quite possible that one may know himself."

ANSWERS TO MY OWN CORRESPONDENTS.

Lucia:—I am sorry that in your innocence you should have placed any dependence upon the statements of "a New York Correspondent." It is a pity to pull down any of the fine air-castles they are in the habit of building; still it is my duty to inform you that these gentry often describe, with the greatest minuteness, authors and authoresses whom they have never seen, manufacturing, at the same time, little personal histories concerning these celebrities, valuable only as ingenious specimen-"bricks, made without 'straw." It matters little to the writers whether nature has furnished the authoress about whom they romance with black eyes or blue, brown hair or flaxen; whether nature made her a six-foot grenadier, or a symmetrical pocket edition of womanhood; the description answers all the same for the provincial paper for which it was intended, and these Ananias and Sapphira gentry find that a spicy lie pays as well as the truth—at least till they are found out. No, Madam; notwithstanding the statements of your valuable "New York Correspondent" for the ——, I have no "daughters married;" I never "wear a black stocking on one foot and a white one on the other, at the same time, to attract attention;" I never "rode on the top of an omnibus;" I don't "smoke cigarettes or chew opium;" I have no personal knowledge concerning the "mud-scow," "handcart," "cooking stove," and "hotel" that you have his authority for saying have been severally "named for me." I am not "married to Mr. Bonner," who has a most estimable wife of his own. I never "delivered an address in public;" and with regard to "the amount I have made by my pen," you and the special "New York Correspondent" are quite at liberty to speculate about it, without any assistance from me. As to my "religious creed," the first article in it is, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

Fanny Fern

THE REASON WHY.

Can anybody enlighten my mind in regard to a point upon which I grope in Egyptian darkness? Can anybody tell me why the *dog* has been selected by the universal voice of mankind to embody everything that is approbrious? Why, if one wishes to convey the extremest idea of forlornness, he should say: "It is a night in which not even a dog would be stirring," or, "one would not even treat a dog as such a person was treated;" or, "a pittance was thrown one as you would throw a bone to a dog;" or, that such a person "leads the life of a dog;" or has "a hang-dog look;" or, that some ne'er-do-well of a family is a "sad dog," or a "sorry dog," or "a snappish cur," or a "good-for-nothing puppy." Then, again, perhaps I may be pardoned for alluding distantly and delicately to the most approved gutter mode of conveying a stinging insult—viz., that such a fellow is the undoubted son and heir of one of the *ladies* of this family of quadrupeds.

Now, I have reflected deeply on this *pugnacious* subject, and without a glimmer of satisfaction to my doubts. I ask, again, of this crowd of persecutors, why—*dog?* Why not cow, or ox, or horse, as well? It is my private opinion the "dog has had his day." Let people now hit somebody of their own size.

Fanny Fern.

MAKERS AND SPENDERS.

It is apparent that an immense part of what is gained is not spent by those who gain it. Whether wages, salaries, stipends or fees, the most of those who work for them enjoy but a small part themselves. All that a man gets in this world is a cup of coffee and a roll in the morning, a slice of meat, perhaps, for dinner, and possibly a cup of tea in the evening. Now and then he gets a new coat. But this is all. The most of what he wins fills other mouths entirely. The money goes, he hardly knows where. Some part, no doubt, feeds the creatures whom he has taken in bond from nature, and is obliged both by law and by his own feelings to support. But yet, making allowances for all that, and for taxes besides, which may be described as a drainage almost equally unavoidable—by far the most of what most people acquire by their own handiwork is spent and enjoyed, not by themselves, but by others. You, ye sheep, says Virgil, grow wool not for yourselves; you, ye bees, make honey not for yourselves; you, ye oxen, draw plows not for yourselves. This is in a great measure the case with mankind, too. A few of us are industrious to the excoriation of our fingers, and the dizzying of our heads; but, by reason of our very application, we have neither time nor taste to spend the result: it goes to provide senseless luxuries to persons who are some way or other connected with us, and who, relying more upon our resources than we are ourselves disposed to do, permit themselves to have abundance of both time and taste. Who do you think keep up the deep-heeled boots, and the handsome clothes, and the cigars that are smoked on our fashionable streets? Not, to be sure, the smocked-faced fools who wear and whiff them. Who do you think support the fine fancy taverns, which, under the monkey names of cafés, and saloons, and restaurants, now ornament our cities? Not, to be sure, the strutting coxcombs who frequent these places, and think they are enjoying life. It almost all comes out of the pockets of industrious fathers, brothers, and other oppressed relations, who would be shocked at nothing so much as to be told that they supported such follies.

AN INCIDENT IN SCHUYLER'S CAREER.

We have often heard it asked if no one among all the shrewd business men and sharp "operators" in the country ever suspected the notorious forger Schuyler, *before* his frauds on the New Haven Railroad Company became known. We have, in fact, often asked the question ourselves, and wondered how Schuyler could so long carry on such stupendous swindles and yet retain the confidence of the community. The other day, we asked the question of E. B. Wesley, Esq., the well-known broker of this city. Mr. Wesley replied that there was *one* man who suspected Schuyler, and, so far as he knew, only one; "and that," said Mr. W., "was Rufus H. King, the President of the New York State Bank at Albany. Some time before Schuyler's frauds were detected," continued Mr. Wesley, "I offered a hundred shares of New Haven Railroad stock, as collateral to Mr. King, and he refused to take it, on the ground that, as Schuyler was both the President and the transfer agent of that company, there was no sufficient check upon him, and that therefore, in his opinion, the New Haven stock was not safe. I dwelt upon Schuyler's high position in this city, and the great confidence reposed in him by the entire community, but Mr. King was immovable, and would only let me have the loan on my personal responsibility, and on the condition that I would in a few days substitute other collaterals in the place of the New Haven stock." This fact, which we have Mr. Wesley's permission to publish, does great credit to the farseeing sagacity of the President of the New York State Bank; and it gratifies us to know that there was at least one man in the community shrewd enough to suspect that once highly respectable but subsequently infamous individual.

TALENT AND ENERGY.

The theory of the poet Gray, that undeveloped Hampdens, Miltons and Cromwells lie mouldering in many a village graveyard, is a very pretty one and *may* be true. The world, however, can only judge of a man's capabilities by what he says and does, and it rightly prefers the man of small talent who makes occasions for its exercise, to the mental giant, whose intellect lies dormant until occasion wakes it up. Latent Genius that can only be called into action by a rare combination of exciting circumstances, is of less practical value to mankind and to its owner, than mediocre ability with plenty of spontaneous energy behind it.

We could put our finger upon many individuals of very moderate intellectual calibre, who have left greater minds hull down in their wake in the race for fortune and even fame. The success of such men is due to their *motive power*. The public refers to them as "perfect steamboats;" and, practically speaking, they are worth all the gifted do-nothings that ever lived or will live. You may call them fools if you will, but they achieve their objects, and not unfrequently extend a helping hand to laggards of a higher order of talent, but of less energy and determination than themselves.

These facts—and we all know by our daily experience that they *are* facts—are consoling to persons in whom ordinary capacity is combined with irrepressible pluck and indomitable perseverence—men, who, as Billy Black says in the farce, "never give nothing up."

Really great men, however; those who make their mark upon the age in which they live and survive it in history, are a class of beings of a different order. A strong intellect, high moral qualities, and energy commensurate to their full development, are the elements of true greatness, and whoever possesses these best gifts of God to man, is indeed "only a little lower than the angels." Alas! like Angel's visits the advents of such benefactors of their race are "few and far between;" and, when most needed, we too often look for them in vain.

JUST GOT MARRIED.

So, young lady, you've just got married, and you want to make a show! You desire to convince your early companions and your present associates that you have made a good match, and in order to do this you will directly, in your daily policy and indirectly in your customary talk, make them believe that he is a great deal "better off" than he is. You must have marble mantels, and tapestry carpets, and then you want a piano, upon which you don't know how to play, simply because your old friend Sophia has got one; and a thousand other costly articles must be obtained, all to gratify your vanity. Your poor husband gratifies your desires to the extent of his abilities, says he cannot do more, and then you become sulky, pout, leave the buttons off his shirts, and let him shirk for himself "around the house." Young lady, you have made a mistake. Be content with a little, if it is sufficient to keep you comfortable. Save what superfluities cost, and buy substantialities. Never mind what Mary Jane possesses. Look to what yourself and children may be possessed of two or three years hence—if you are prudent!

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION.

Are blows necessary in the government of children? We think not. We think this punishment should never even be inflicted by the parent, much less delegated by him to teachers, or those who have temporary authority over children and youth. The right system having always been pursued with children, from infancy, little or no trouble will be found; by the right system we mean the determined establishment of authority on the part of the parent. But what if "the right system" has *not* been pursued? Well, then we reply that a *wrong* system can never make up the deficiency. There is that in the breast of the most neglected and mis-educated child which can be made available to perfect obedience, by kind, gentle, yet *firm* words. The system has been tried over and over again with those poor unfortunates whose earliest breath has been moral pollution. Therefore we say emphatically—*no blows!* They are the worst of all possible arguments to the headstrong and wayward, and crush the very life out of the timid and gentle.

"NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE."

There is nothing in which the press is more humbugged, or was more humbugged—we think that it is now pretty much over—than in the letters written from New York, professedly from the voluntary kindness of the writers, but really with the view of getting into circulation certain puffs that are adroitly slipped in between items of news. For these puffs the writers are paid in New York, stipulating to get them published in a certain number of papers. We frequently receive such letters, and two of them are on our table now; but we never publish them.—*Prov. Jour.*

The above we know to be true. The time was when "New York Correspondence" was worth something, but it has been completely "*run into the ground*" by a gang of literary hacks and puffers, who bargain to notice in their letters a man's business for a certain number of dollars. The lucubrations of such unprincipled charlatans cannot, of course, be worth much! Country editors will have their eyes opened by-and-by.

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Clyde, Jan. 31st, 1861.

Mr. Bonner:—In your edition of Jan. 26th, in the "Notices to Correspondents," in answer to "L. M. N." you say that until within the last hundred years the whole art of Dentistry appears to have consisted only in the extraction of teeth, an operation usually performed by barbers. Now you were never more mistaken in your life. The mechanical part of the Dental Profession extends back to the time of the Roman Empire. We have plenty of evidence to prove that artificial teeth were in use in the days of Pliny and Martial. According to the last named author, Ægle, one of the daughters of Hesperus, used artificial teeth.

> "Sic dentata sibi videtur. Ægle,
> Emptis, opibus, Indicoque cornu."
> Martial, Lib. 1, 72.

> To display teeth like thine, Ægle,
> We purchase bone and horn of India,

Again, in speaking of two ladies of Athens, he says:

> "Thais habet nigros, niveos Lecania dentes,
> Quæ ratio est? emptos hæc, habet illa suos."
> Martial, Lib. 5, 44.

> Thais has black teeth: Lecania white as snow;
> What is the reason? hers are purchased,
> She (Thais) has her own.

Will you please notice this for the benefit of L. M. N.?

I remain yours, &c., G. P. L.

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Satisfactory Bail.—A gentleman recently appeared in a Wisconsin court to give bail for a friend in the sum of three thousand dollars. The clerk of the court, though he well knew the respectability of the gentleman, could not restrain his accustomed impertinence. "Well, sir, how do you make yourself to be worth three thousand dollars?" The gentleman very deliberately specified the particulars up to two thousand nine hundred and forty dollars. "Ay," said the clerk, "but that is not enough by sixty." "For that sum," replied the other, "I have a note of hand of one Thomas Wilson (the clerk himself), and I hope he will have the honesty soon to discharge it." This set the court in a roar. The clerk was for once abashed; and the Judge said, "Well, Mr. Wilson, I think we may accept the bail."

THOUGHTS AS THEY OCCUR.—No. 82.

BY ONE WHO KEEPS HIS EYES AND EARS OPEN.

If to "*take thought*" for our clothes is a sin, there is an immense weight of transgression resting on Christendom. Commentators, however, interpose their kind offices between clothiers and clothes-wearers, saying that honest thoughtfulness is not forbidden, but a worrisome, anxious thought. And they call to their help the fact that, in old English usage, *thought* signified anxiety, grieffulness. So we may think, if it be hopeful, cheerful, good-natured. In other words, those who don't know when to get a shirt or a coat; whose feet threaten to protrude from boot or shoe, must not fret about it; nor overhang the future with gloomy forebodings. If by this anxiety they could fish up a pair of boots, or evoke a good garment, there might be some sense in it. But disconsolate brooding over one's poverty will never weave cloth nor cut out coats, nor sew up gaping rips and rents. It is bad enough to be cold, to wear an unseemly suit, to be excluded from society for want of a decent covering. It is bad enough to be obliged to carry the badge of poverty all over you; to find every application prejudged by the scornful eye that looks at your uncomely garb; to find yourself set apart like a leper, by something that really is not a part of *you*, but a mere external circumstance;—all this, besides cold and the ill health which it produces. But will fretting help you? Will it make your case better on the outside? Why should a man put on his soul the shirt of Nessus, because his body is clad in rags? Let there be peace within, at any rate. That is all that is left to a poor man, often,—his own courage and spirit!

If it be thought an easy thing to sit in a warm room, in a suit of West-of-England broadcloth, by the side of a fragrant cup of golden coffee, and tell a poor man how to enjoy cold and hunger, I will freely admit it. But, does that make the advice less useful? Must a man be himself sick before he can heal the sick? Must one be ignorant before he can be a teacher of the ignorant? Besides, if I was a poor, ragged loon, dodging from place to place, an outcast, working at every disadvantage, I am afraid I should be too cross, too peevish to give good advice. And I must avail myself of Comfort, to say the things that are true to Discomfort!

Frets are nettles. Some men insist upon putting their hands on them whenever they can and then complain of being stung! Repinings are thistles; and some men never lose an opportunity of giving themselves a whipping with thistle-stalks!

You see, friend Bonner, that I am utilitarian. I object to *useless* worrying. If it were a flax-cotton out of which men could spin linen garments, it would be different. But when I see a man grow warmer for peevishness; better clothed for anxiety about clothes; when I see good coal come tumbling down his chimney and filling his grate, because he is all afret to know where to get his next bushel of coal, then I may change my mind. Comfort is very comfortable; and want is very painful. But that is the very reason why we should refuse to make it any worse.

When men are poor they are in great danger of having their poverty *strike in*. And to prevent this, I take it, is the express purpose of the Master who was poorer than we are, dependent for food upon charity, having no place where he might even lay his head twice in succession. To every anxiety for worldly comfort he said: "*Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things before ye ask.*"

"DIVINING RODS."

St. Louis, Feb. 3d, 1861.

Editor of the Ledger:—In your answer to correspondent S. I., in your edition of 9th inst. you speak of a belief prevalent some one hundred and fifty years ago, about parties finding springs or running water with the aid of a divining rod, and give it as your opinion that it cannot be done. Let me give you my experience on this matter: Twenty-five years ago, in Virginia, I knew of parties digging and finding water in abundance, at the instance of a man who was regarded as a "water witch," and who used a hazel or peach wand. I knew nothing then of the phenomena; I only knew of the fact. About ten years since, in looking over some articles in the Patent Reports, the subject was discussed at length, and the reason explained on scientific principles, and I refer you to the article. The reasons are simple. Wherever there is a spring of water underground, it is highly charged with electricity, more so than the surrounding earth, or it is in motion with the water, or is contained in the water, and any person who is highly charged with electricity, as some persons are in a great degree, can detect this water by walking over the place, holding in a peculiar position a forked stick of peach or willow wood. On coming to the spot it will incline downwards, and with so much force sometimes as to twist the bark off the wood. When my attention was attracted to this report, I had been seeking for water, and an adjoining neighbor (in Illinois) had dug two or three wells to the depth of twenty to thirty feet without finding water. I immediately, after reading the article, cut a peach fork, and walked around the place where they had been digging, and within twenty feet of the dry well, the rod, or forked twig, turned downwards; we commenced digging, and at the depth of twenty feet found plenty of water. I went to my own place, and found in many spots the same violent indications, although five or ten feet from it no such signs were visible. The result was that four wells were dug, varying in depth from twelve to twenty-five feet, where we least expected to find water; and there has been an abundant supply ever since, except the last very dry summer.

If you take the trouble to hunt up the article I have alluded to, published, I think, eight or ten years ago in the Patent Office Reports, and publish it for the benefit of your readers, you will not only amuse them but perhaps confer a great favor on some farmers, who suffer for the want of good water when they may find it at their doors. Very respectfully, yours, Wm. E. Wilson.

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[From the Louisville (Ky.) Journal, Jan. 23.]

The Ledger and its Contributors.—We have been looking over the prospectus of this world-wide circulated sheet, and see that our friend Bonner strikes us with renewed admiration of his energy in making the Ledger a thing not for the usual newspaper "age, but for all time." Mr. Bonner is worthy of the success that makes his way blossom, not only for his devotion to his enterprise in a business and material point of view, but for his regard to the high intellectual, literary, and moral character of his paper.

The moral quality in speaking of literature is not essential, but in a paper intended for the people it *is*, most decidedly, for it must go into the heart of the household, and be recognized with home education and cradle-faith, and fireside-religion among the masses.

The intelligent and literary character of the Ledger is very high. Certainly we need not go beyond the names of a few of its principal contributors to determine this. Edward Everett, George Bancroft, Wm. C. Bryant, are three names that might give the Ledger a reputation, each one by itself; while those of N. P. Willis, John G. Saxe, Gen. Morris, Mrs. Sigourney, Fanny Fern, Anna Cora Ritchie, Alice Cary, Sallie M. Bryan, Marion Harland, Phœbe Cary, Emma Alice Browne, and others named and unnamed, would insure the attraction of a myriad readers to their prose or poetry, their tales and sketches, romances and poems.

The tales of Mrs. Southworth, Marion Harland, Miss E. A. Dupuy, Mr. Cobb, and others, have always a charm to thousands; the sketches of Everett, of Bancroft, of "One who has his Eyes and Ears open," are always characterized by scholarly learning and fine culture, deep thought, entertaining observation, and lively style, brightening the grave with the gay—giving the serious face the merry twinkle of expression; the poems of Bryant are always noble and pure—brooks of music in meadows of flowers.

ON THE FERRY.

BY MARY CLEMMER AMES.

On the ferry sailing over
  To the city, lying dim,
In the mellow mist of evening,
  On the river's farther rim.
On the ferry, gazing outward,
  O'er the ocean far, and cold,
While the blue bay dips its waters
  In the sunset's fleeting gold.

On the ferry, gazing outward,
  O, thou ocean strong and wide,
Every pulse is beating measure
  With the rhythm of thy tide!
While thy waves break swift and eager,
  Motionless the great ships stand,
And above each pendulous pennon,
  Lures me with a beckoning hand.
Shifting o'er the uneasy water,
  Lean the sunset bars of flame,
Like the legendary ladder,
  On which angels went and came.

In another summer evening,
  On, a little way before,
I shall reach another ferry,
  Seeking swift a farther shore.
I shall cross a drearier ferry—
  Crossing to return no more,
Sailing for a fairer city,
  Lying on a fairer shore.

Will God's sunshine lean around me
  Fusing every wave in gold?
Will you row me gently over,
  Charon, boatman, calm and cold?
When the earth-airs cease to chill me,
  When my meagre day is done,
Boatman, bear me through the splendor,
  Falling from the setting sun!
Bear me outward, to the mystery
  The Eternal will unfold—
To the unrevealéd glory,
  Hid within yon gates of gold.

Life may touch the soul so gently,
  We can hardly call it rough;
Yet we'll all say in it's closing,
  Our brief day's been long enough.
So I stand with gathered garments,
  Ere the deeper shadows fall;
Drops my heart its last, last idol,
  Listening for the boatman's call.
Come! and by my spirit's sinking,
  By my shrinking fears untold,
Bear me gently o'er those waters,
  Charon, boatman, calm and cold.

MOSES ORAN;

OR,

"THE BURGLARS' NEST."

BY GEO. CLARENCE BLANCHARD.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE NARRATIVE PROCEEDS.

The driver of the cab, in obedience to Tarleton's command, had leaped to the box and seized the reins, when, to his surprise, they were suddenly torn from his grasp, and a youth stood in front, levelling a pistol at his head.

"Speak or move, and you are a dead man."

The gesture and tone of the youth was so menacing, that the man instantly shrank back, cowed and terrified. The other, with the quickness of lightning, proceeded to unloose the traces, and detach the horse from the vehicle.

"Go on! go on!" called Tarleton, savagely, thrusting his head out of the cab window. "In the name of Hades, what are you waiting for?"

The girl was beginning to revive, and he feared she might arouse the neighborhood with her screams, but still the cab moved not.

Launching the most frightful imprecations on the head of the driver, he placed the insensible little maiden in a seat, and sprang out. Just as he did so, a stunning blow sent him reeling backward. He recovered himself instantly, and fiercely closed and grappled with his assailant. They turned, twisted, and doubled over in that close, terrific encounter. Breathless and panting, the two mutually paused before the cab door. The light fell on the features of his antagonist, and Tarleton started back in surprise. It was Osborne.

"You treacherous young whelp!" gasped he, turning white with passion, "what fiend sent you here?"

"Scoundrel!" returned Osborne, calmly, "accident brought me to this spot, for no other purpose than to thwart your base scheme. Thank God! I have arrived in time. The girl you shall not touch." As he said this, he made a movement towards the vehicle, when, with a cry of wrath, the lawyer spat in his face, and fell upon him with all the fury of a tiger.

Osborne, though young and vigorous, was hardly a match for his taller and more powerful opponent. He fought with all his heart and soul, but the body has more to do in such contests than the mind, and our hero found himself rapidly losing strength.

Frantic with rage and jealousy, Mr. Tarleton rained down his blows like hail on the boy, and to make the combat still more unequal, the cabman, seeing how matters were proceeding, gallantly descended from his perch and assisted the lawyer. The battle waxed fierce, and the noise and confusion attracted the attention of a party of men who were returning from their club. They interfered, and the belligerents incontinently separated.

Osborne, covered with blood and breathless with exertion, nevertheless retained sufficient presence of mind.

"Gentlemen!" he exclaimed, "this man is abducting a young lady from her home. Will you permit it?"

"*Liar!*" yelled the lawyer, foaming with passion. He made a movement to rush upon Osborne, but the bystanders prevented him.

"She's in the cab. If one of you can run over to yonder house, and call Mr. Van Cleeker, you will find I am correct."

Fanny, still unconscious, was borne out into the open air.

At the sight of the pale and lovely features of the girl, a murmur of indignation ran through the group. They pressed menacingly upon the lawyer. His cheek blanched, but he quickly regained his composure.

"The young lady is my affianced wife," explained he, haughtily. "I was just about to take her home, when this young ruffian assaulted me and she, in her terror, swooned."

Plausible as was this statement, it did not seem very satisfactory. Suspicious, scowling eyes were levelled at him, and Tarleton grew manifestly uneasy in spite of himself.

At this moment two of the constabulary force approached. The crafty lawyer's face lit up with exultant meaning.

"Here!" he exclaimed, pointing to Osborne. "Secure that fellow before he escapes. He's a a burglar—an escaped felon!"

Now it so happened that these were the very officers who had formerly arrested Osborne, and the moment they saw him, he was recognized at once.

"Come, no resistance," said one of them, producing a pistol and a pair of handcuffs.

"I don't intend to offer any," replied Osborne, coolly extending his hands.

"See that you don't, that's all," returned the other, with a scowl. "Nice fellow!—you didn't break jail for nothing, did ye?"

In a moment the tide had turned, and the bystanders pressed around to obtain a sight of one of the famous burglar gang. Osborne's appearance at that moment was certainly not very preposessing, for his clothes had been nearly torn off his back, and his face was swollen and besmeared with blood.

"Young in years, but old in villainy," observed one.

"Blast him!" said another, "he won't escape again."

In the midst of the insults and taunts, Osborne felt some consolation in knowing that at least he had thwarted the villainous scheme of the lawyer, for, ere he was dragged off he saw Mr. Van Cleeker hurrying up to take charge of his daughter.

He had no time to mark the result, or make any further explanation. He was hurried off, accompanied by the men, who offered themselves as a body guard in case a rescue was attempted.

Fanny, now partially recovered, clung to her father, and begged imploringly to be taken from the presence of Tarleton.

The lawyer meanwhile stood with his arms folded, surveying the two with cool effrontery.

Mr. Van Cleeker was the first to speak.

"How dare you take such a liberty with my child?" he demanded, sternly.

"You are the last one who ought to ask the question," returned the lawyer, insolently. "I only intended to marry the little jade in a private way."

"Scoundrel!" returned Mr. Van Cleeker, in a voice that was choked by indignation; "this is going too far, sir! altogether too far!"

Job Tarleton, with a threatening gesture, advanced nearer to the old gentleman.

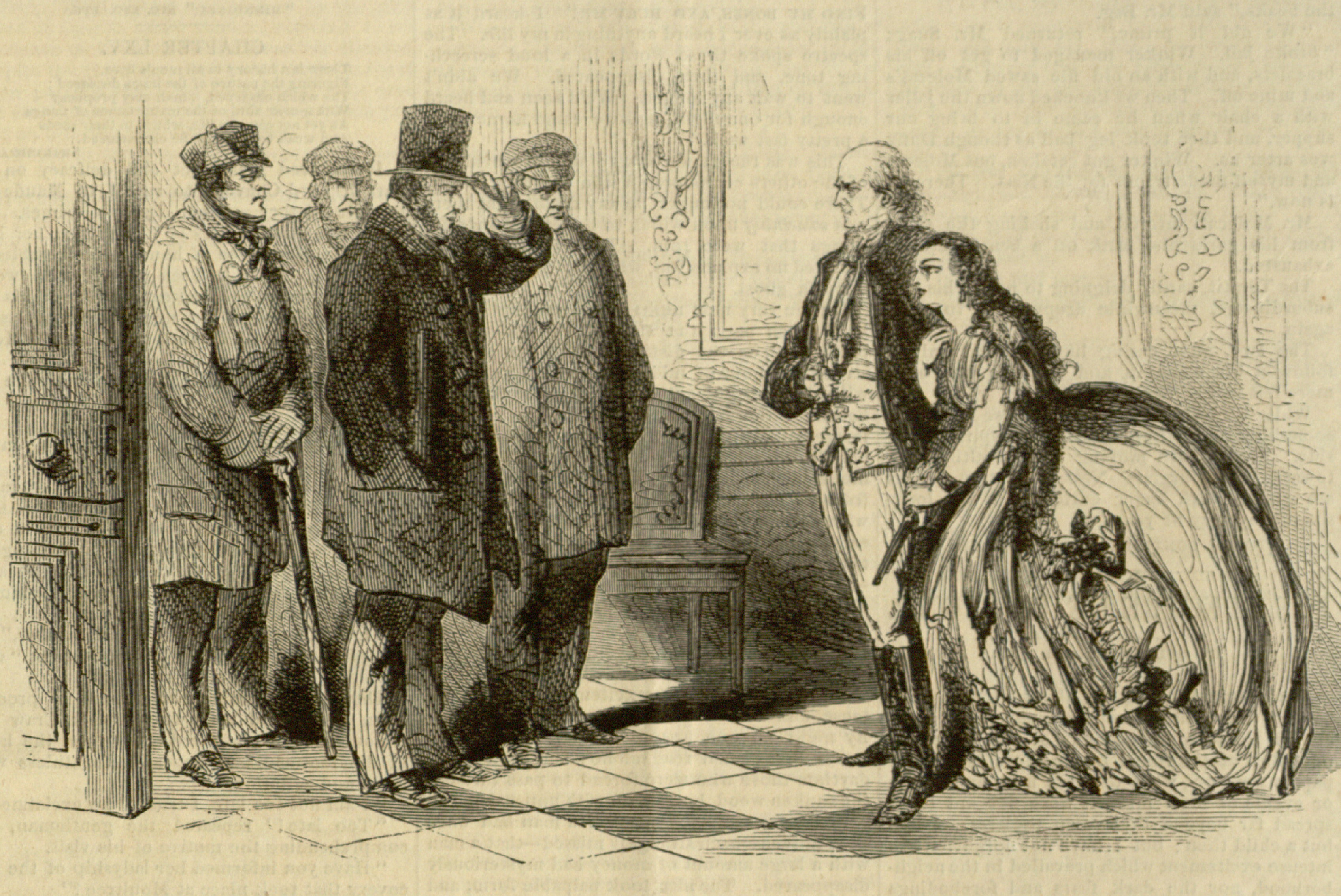
"Don't be alarmed, Fanny," said her father.

Fanny clung wildly to him.

"Old man," said Tarleton, sneeringly, "you forget yourself; remember *your pledge!*"

"Pledge!" repeated Mr. Van Cleeker. "Did I ever make a pledge, or tacitly consent, in any way, to my daughter being abused? This shameful outrage shall be known!"

The lawyer gnashed his teeth with ill-suppressed passion.



AN OFFICIAL VISIT.

"No!" continued the old gentleman, with emphasis; "I never made a pledge of any such nature. Never would I have consented to this infamous plot—*never!*"

"*Van Cleeker, wretched old man, say no more!*" hissed the lawyer, with malignant earnestness. "*Recollect, I am the master*, not you!"

The old gentleman's eye flashed; his spirit was fairly aroused.

"Job Tarleton, I laugh at your threats! Do your worst—present your claims—and I will expose your villainy!"

"Beware!" rejoined the lawyer, writhing with impotent rage; "you are in my power still."

"I fear you not!" returned Mr. Van Cleeker, haughtily. "Come, Fanny, we will stand no longer here, holding converse with this bad man; come!" He gently drew his daughter's arm within in his own, and turned back to Mrs. Beagles's.

The ball was progressing very spiritedly, but neither of them felt any interest; and after allowing his daughter to recover sufficiently from the excitement, he called his carriage, and forthwith took his departure.

In a short time the two were sitting by a large, cheerful woodfire, in Mr. Van Cleeker's chamber.

"I never would have suspected Tarleton capable of such baseness," observed the old gentleman, who was occupying his favorite arm-chair. "He had my entire confidence; and I hardly comprehend his motive for carrying you off, unless"—he shuddered—"unless he had some dark, sinister design. Poor child! I never dreamed my selfishness was exposing you to such dangers. Forgive me, Fanny, for causing you so much suffering. Ah! pride, pride—what will it not incite or tempt us to do!"

Fanny was touched; her sensibilities were easily excited, and in the fulness of her joy at her father's changed demeanor, she opened her heart and told him everything.

Mr. Van Cleeker listened with the most profound astonishment to the recapitulation of Osborne's narrative, the duplicity of Tarleton, and lastly to the revelation of the chest of gold.

"Oh, Fanny, Fanny!" he ejaculated, "what a wretch am I! unworthy of all your love and confidence; I have deceived you—the statement is true, though how the burglar found it out I do not know. This treasure I saved from the wreck of my fortune, intending it as a dowry for yourself; but pressed by that unrelenting, griping man, spurred on by pride, I did consent to his wedding you rather than the estate should pass from me. For several weeks he has been threatening to foreclose the mortgage unless I hastened the marriage. In my distress and pride, I consented to the employment of gentle means of coercion; but meanly taking advantage of my weak, compliant disposition, he has dared to attempt this insult, and by Heavens!" he exclaimed, with sudden energy, "were I a wanderer this very night, he should not have you!"

Fanny uttered a glad, exultant cry of joy.

"Oh, dear father, am I disenthralled at last? This is happiness—this is pleasure! What if fortune does desert us, and lordly people sneer at and pass us by. Secure in your daughter's true affection, you'll find her ever loving, trusting and obedient. Give up house and all to this bad man, and I will work and toil for you, my dear father."

"Sweet girl," returned Mr. Van Cleeker, taking the little, enthusiastic maiden in his arms, and kissing her with parental tenderness, "happy is the man who wins you for a wife; he'll get a treasure more enduring than handsome face or form—a loving heart, uncankered by one selfish wish or thought—a beautiful, cheerful, radiant spirit——"

Fanny playfully placed her hand over his mouth.

"No more," she said, smiling. "Parents are partial, and you will make me vain. Filial affection, you know, is natural."

"So it is, my dear, but yours is different. Ah, my dear girl, if you knew how many sleepless nights and anxious hours I have spent because of you, you would not think me so unfeeling; but I never supposed Tarleton would have dared to do this thing. Base wretch! he will not hesitate, now his game is balked, to ruin me at once. Oh, 'tis hard," exclaimed he, bitterly, "to sacrifice my old homestead, to lose my position in society; but when they must be purchased only by my daughter's infamy, I'll cheerfully resign them all, and welcome poverty as a friend, indeed."

Fanny did not reply; her beautiful features glowed and flushed with a hundred joyful emotions. Tarleton's reign of persecution was now over. Oh, Heavens! what pleasure to have those chains cast off, and feel that she was free again!

At that moment the two were startled by a loud ringing at the door bell.

"Who can it be at this late hour!" exclaimed the old gentleman, in very natural surprise. "It's past midnight."

"Father, don't go down, I implore you!" said Fanny, entreatingly.

The ringing continued again furiously.

"I must," said Mr. Van Cleeker, rising; "Mrs. Platt and Nancy, who were quite worn out with waiting for us, have long ago retired; some one must be sick in the neighborhood—there they are ringing again."

"Then if you will go I will accompany you," said the little maiden.

Mr. Van Cleeker demurred, but Fanny looked so very decided that he reluctantly consented. He went to the closet and got a pistol.

Throwing on a shawl, Miss Van Cleeker followed her parent down stairs, with trembling, anxious suspense.

When the front door opened, five or six sturdy men appeared at the threshold. Fanny shrank back in mute terror.

"What do you here at this late hour?" spoke Mr. Van Cleeker, sternly.

"Official business, sir," replied one of the men civilly touching his cap. "Is this Mr. Van Cleeker?"

"That is my name," replied the old gentleman haughtily.

"We are the night police!" explained the same man, advancing unbidden in; "we have been detailed by the chief of the auxiliary force to guard your premises, as information has been received from a positive source of a contemplated burglary at one o'clock."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the old gentleman, in amazement.

The officers now quietly entered and closed the door.

"How did you hear of this!" inquired Mr. Van Cleeker, anxiously.

"A young burglar, whom we captured this night, has confessed the whole plot. It may be a trick to lead us off, but at any rate we are going to keep a look out."

The chief spokesman of the police now held a whispered consultation with his companions; and having signified a wish that the young lady should retire, they made the old gentleman acquainted with their general plan of action.

CHAPTER XXVI.

JOB TARLETON COMES TO A CONCLUSION.

Long after the old gentleman and his daughter had gone, Job Tarleton remained in the same spot, transfixed by surprise, disappointment and rage. He could scarcely believe his senses to see the changed demeanor of Mr. Van Cleeker; he felt that his power over him was ended, and the golden prize of beauty snatched from his grasp.

With a fearful oath on his lips, he flung himself into the vehicle, and directing the cabman to leave him at his residence, sank back on the seat in reckless apathy.

As the cab rattled over the stony street, he thought over all that had occurred, and cursed Osborne, cursed his late dupe, and cursed himself for his own stupidity. Then he thought of the mysterious stranger, the murder, the knife, and a sickening feeling came over him—a vague, strange, fearful apprehension of a horrible death, which was associated with something more terrible than mere bodily pain, disgrace, ignominy; and then a dark phantom passed before his mental vision, and he shuddered with inward horror. Everything had gone wrong with him of late; his best laid schemes had been thwarted.

"It is strange," muttered he, "that the cloaked man should stay away. I would see him again. Could it have been a weak attempt to bully me?" He gnashed his teeth with vindictive malice at the thought.

The cab now paused in Oxford Place. Tossing the driver his fare, Tarleton hastily entered. His valet came to meet him in the passage with a mysterious air.

"Mr. Tarleton," whispered he, "there's a man been waiting here for you, sir, ever since ten o'clock. I told him, sir, you wasn't home, but he would stay."

The lawyer's face turned pale.

"Did you ever see him before?"

"No, sir, I can't say that I ever did. He wouldn't give me his name. He's a strange-looking man, and wears a long cloak and——"

"Enough!" Tarleton's voice grew husky. "I'll see him; where is he now?"

"In the library, sir. I have been watching him carefully for hours, but he hasn't stirred from his seat."

"Now, Johnson," observed Tarleton, with as composed an air as he could assume, "you need not stay up any longer. I have important business with this man. You will obey me."

"Very good, sir," returned the valet; and, having assisted his master off with his coat, the faithful servant promptly retired.

Job Tarleton, smoothening the scowl on his brow, put on a free, easy manner, and walked into the library.

The first object he saw was the cloaked man, occupying a seat near the window, his slouched hat, as usual, drawn over his face, and his whole attitude one of calm, self-possessed dignity.

"Ah!" exclaimed Tarleton, blandly, "good evening to you."

"I should rather think it were good morning," returned the cloaked man. "Unwelcome visits are never very seasonable."

"You did not keep your appointment," said Tarleton, taking a seat, and endeavoring to look very unconcerned.

"I did, but you was in fault, not I."

"I know it," returned the lawyer, faintly. "A dear friend of mine was slaughtered in the street by some ruffians, and in the excitement I forgot it. I remember now that I locked the door. Why did you not call again? These business matters are more conveniently disposed of in my office."

"I thought it better to see you here," returned the other, curtly. "Job Tarleton, I have come to obtain your answer; no equivocation or evasion shall cheat me now. Your guarantee I must have."

"What is it you require?" returned Tarleton, with an air of assumed carelessness.

"A virtual relinquishment of your claims to the hand of the young lady."

At any other time this demand would have made the lawyer wince, but being already in a quandary, he listened in reckless indifference.

"Well," he replied, with a coolness that surprised the cloaked man, "I am ready to surrender my right to the young lady. You, of course, cannot expect me to relinquish anything else; when the mortgages are due, they will be foreclosed. I shall exact every cent when 'tis legally mine."

"Not a penny more than is your due," returned the cloaked man, sternly. "Job Tarleton, you are not so cunning but I can read your thoughts, understand your aims, dissect your motives; but——"

"Now, by Heavens!" interrupted Tarleton, fiercely, "I won't be bullied in my own house; when it comes to that, I plainly tell you I shall not hesitate to have my all. Yes—all," he continued, grinding his teeth at the recollection of the last interview with Mr. Van Cleeker; "and, were the old man to get down on his knees, beg in the most abject, meek submissiveness, I would spurn him." The veins stood out on his temples as he spoke. "Aye, *I would spurn him as a dog!*"

"You will not relinquish——"

"*Never!*" repeated Tarleton, determinedly. "You need not try by idle threats to intimidate me further. That you know secrets of mine, I own; but were you in league with the devil, I would not bend an inch. Come, are you answered?"

"Job Tarleton, you little dream what I can say of you, or your words would be more finely measured. Ah! how proud, how grand we are, when, in life's current, we can dash along without a rebuking voice or scornful finger to point towards us. Fame, wealth and greatness, unsullied by bad deeds, soar us far above the vulgar herd, and awe them by the majesty of goodness; but when 'tis only outside show, and evil report does fix a stain upon it, the storms and hisses shall drive us off the stage where we did love to strut and air our vanities. So, when your peacock, borrowed plumes shall be torn off——"

"I comprehend you," replied Job Tarleton, sneeringly; "you think to frighten me with that air of lofty mystery. I despise your idle hints."

"I have no wish to frighten you," returned the cloaked man, with impressive dignity. "You know me not, or would not think my presence here for such an idle purpose. Listen;" the cloaked man bent over, and whispered in Tarleton's ear.

The lawyer shrunk back; his face turned ashy pale.

"In Heaven's name, who are you?"

"See," returned the other solemnly. Slowly he lifted off his slouched hat, then he displaced a heavy moustache and a black wig, and thus revealed to the lawyer a calm, handsome face of magisterial aspect. "Do you know me now?" said the stranger, calmly.

Tarleton uttered a low cry and started back in abject terror.

"Great God!" he gasped, "still alive? What fiend sent you here?"

The perspiration stood in great drops on his forehead.

"What fiend sent me here?" repeated the stranger, sternly. "Rather say what angel—fiends only lead us to evil acts, angels to the commission of deeds of goodness. No wonder you stand trembling before me now. Unscrupulous villain! *where is the money of which you have defrauded the rightful heirs of the Oran estate?*"

These words fell like a thunderbolt on the startled lawyer—he cowed before him.

"Answer me, villain!"

"My lord—my lord, the money is safe. I never meant to defraud."

"Hush!" said the other, with a solemn air, "attempt not to falsify the matter—your treachery and dishonest dealing are all known. Oh, is it possible," he continued, "that my trusty lawyer could so betray his trust and deceive his benefactor? You tremble, but thank me for my mercy. I shall not expose you, provided you agree to two conditions."

"Name them," said Mr. Tarleton, eagerly.

"First, relinquish your claim on the old man Van Cleeker, secondly, return the money you have so fraudulently taken! I could force these, but you see I am lenient."

"My lord, I agree," returned Tarleton, submissively. "You will not expose me?"

"You have my word," returned the other, haughtily. "Lord Lenox's word is an honorable pledge for his sincerity. See, now, unhappy man, if you can, for once, do a righteous act. To-morrow I will see you again; remember, my title and rank, I prefer concealed—my present name is Morris Choler. If my misguided brother is really dead, as you represented, why then——"

"He is certainly dead," returned Tarleton, quickly.

"That I will soon discover," returned Lord Lenox, with dignity. "If he is really dead his relatives shall be found. But it is near morning. I must away."

So saying, Lord Lenox replaced his wig and moustache, slouched his hat over his face, and without further ceremony quietly retired.

When the front door had fairly closed upon him, Tarleton's deceptive oily face changed to a look of intense hate and rage. He strode the room back and forth in wild excitement for a good hour—then he sat himself down and with his hands resting on his chin, remained in a sort of stupor. The grey light of morn stole in, and he still remained in the same position; the sun came flashing through the casement with cheery rays, but he heeded it not.

"Breakfast is ready sir," announced his valet.

"No matter Johnson," returned the lawyer.

"Won't you take a cup of coffee, sir?" inquired his valet, who observed that his master looked unwell.

"Yes, you may bring it to me."

Tarleton hastily swallowed it—then rose, seized his hat, and strode out into the street—his brain whirling still with the exciting thoughts that chased o'er him. He walked deliberately towards his office, and had got about half way when two stout men, dressed in grey, suddenly paused in front of him and one of them laid his hand on his shoulder.

"Is this Mr. Tarleton?" said he, briefly.

"It is," returned the lawyer, surprised. He was about to push him aside, when the other spoke up.

"Mr. Job Tarleton, of Oxford Place?"

"Yes, sir!" repeated the lawyer, haughtily, "Mr. Job Tarleton of Oxford Place. What do you wish with him, pray?"

The two looked at each other intelligently.

"I think it's all right, Bill," said one.

"Calculate it is," returned the other, coolly. "Now, Mr. Tarleton, taking out a pair of handcuffs, "please let me put these bracelets on. Ben, call a coach before the crowd gets the wink—quick!"

In one minute more the astounded lawyer found himself manacled, and in a carriage between the two officers.

"Gentlemen," he asked, in an agitated voice, "what does this mean? Why, or for what reason am I arrested?"

The officers shook their heads; he could tell best when he got there.

Tarleton sank back in abject despair; the coach rapidly moved off towards the jail.

Suddenly a gleam of joy overspread his features. He turned towards the officers, and inquired if they had any objection to his stopping at his residence for a moment.

The officers hesitated, and after a brief consultation consented, provided they should accompany him. The carriage accordingly paused in Oxford Place, and Tarleton, with his two captors, entered the house.

Job Tarleton easily prevailed upon them to take off the handcuffs. They followed him into the library, where he commenced busying himself turning over some papers, as though scanning them. Suddenly, while the officers' eyes were still directed upon him, he snatched a little phial from a side drawer, and swallowed the contents in a twinkling. The movement was done so expertly that it escaped their notice.

"Now," said Tarleton, turning round cheerfully, "I am ready. The manacles were again fastened to his wrists, and they moved towards the door. Little did those two officers dream, as they conducted their prisoner outside, that they were leading a mystery. A mystery he surely was, even to himself. The streets were echoing with the glad tumult of busy life; the sun was shining as cheerful as it had ever shone, and the sky was the same blue canopy above.

Yet he knew it not, nor heard the glad voices, or felt that he was moving swiftly toward the dark, unfathomable gulf where mortals' steps are ever tending.

Suddenly Mr. Tarleton gave a terrific leap backward.

"No you don't, old boy," exclaimed one, grasping him more tightly. "Bill, hold on to him."

Another strong convulsive twitch, and both officers released him in dismay. His face was distorted, his eyes glaring, and a white foam stood on his mouth.

He fell on the pavement, and writhed and twisted in mortal agony.

The two officers gazed with silent horror.

"He's escaped for certain," observed one.

The officer was right, Mr. Job Tarleton had cheated justice at last.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OVER TO THE NEST AGAIN.

It was a cold November afternoon. The snow was falling fast and thick, in fantastic wreaths, over the "Burglars' Nest."

The little bar-room of Mr. Timothy Beg looked as cozy as a warming wood-fire could make it.

A small table was drawn up before the fire, and a comfortable arm-chair alongside, and in the said chair was our old friend, mine host, his fat cheeks glowing with healthy contentment, and receiving an additional rubicund tinge from the frequent imbibing of hot whiskey punch.

Mr. Beg, in a species of rapt enjoyment, sipped his drink, alternately gazing in the fire and then out of the window, as though drawing a comparison between the two scenes, and finally allowed his sleepy eye to rest on the portly form of his estimable spouse, who was engaged in clearing away the remnants of their dinner.

"My woman," observed Mr. Beg, "aint it pretty nigh the time the Tomtit was back?"

Mrs. Beg nodded.

"So I thought," continued mine host, gurgling down the remainder of his punch, and smacking his lips with an appreciative relish. "I'm thinking something must have gone wrong. I never knew him to let a week slip by without sending me word how matters were going on."

"'Tis a wee bit strange, Tim," returned Mrs. Beg. "You dinna think the bird is caught?"

"Tut, tut," interrupted Mr. Beg, contemptuously; "as far as that goes the Tomtit will take care of himself. Don't concern yourself about it, old woman; the Old Nick himself couldn't get him."

Mr. Beg, with this well-considered opinion, was about to recur to the punch-bowl, when the door burst open with jarring recoil.

Mr. Beg sprang to his feet, with an exclamation of amazement.

Standing before him was a gaunt figure, his clothes nearly torn in shreds, and his sunken features and bloodshot eyes scarcely recognizable as those of a human being.

For some moments the innkeeper regarded the apparition with dumb wonderment.

"*Is it possible!*—the Tomtit?"

"Beg, it's I, and no other," returned the burglar chief, hoarsely. "For God's sake, hand me something to eat! I haven't tasted food for two days."

Mr. Beg, too amazed to offer any reply, pointed silently to the table, where some remnants of cold turkey and bread were still lying. The famished chief rushed at them, and eagerly devoured them.

"Good heavens!" ejaculated mine host, who at last found his tongue, "what has happened?"

"*All's lost, Beg!* Our noble band is *annihilated!*" returned the Tomtit, in a hollow voice. "That treacherous dog! oh, curse him!" he added, shaking his fist in the air. "Could I but get hold of the traitor, I would grind him to powder! He shall pay for this!"

The Tomtit sank down exhausted on a bench.

"I see!" exclaimed Mr. Beg, furiously: "Pluck! I knew it, I knew it. Didn't I tell you so?"

The Tomtit crushed his hat over his eyes, and was silent.

"How did this all happen?" inquired Mr. Beg, more calmly, after silencing his lady, who was testifying her grief in a series of wild screams.

"*Beg*," returned the Tomtit, "I never committed a more fatal error than when I took that young whelp into our band. He has been our secret foe all along; and through him I fell into a trap, my men were butchered, and I barely escaped."

"Curse him!" exclaimed the innkeeper, vindictively, as the recollection of the beating he received from Osborne rose vividly before him. "How did he manage to entrap the Tomtit? How did he succeed in deceiving our chief?"

"Listen," rejoined the Tomtit, huskily, "I will tell you. The fellow was put in the house, but, through some artful manœuvre of his own, got nabbed; and I, like a stupid fool, went through the farce of releasing him. The next opportunity, I sent him to watch the house, designing a descent that very night. The young scoundrel lays the plot before the police: we fell like good, easy fools into the trap. Slinger was shot dead, and Snag, Molecat, Winker, all captured. I came very near being caught myself, and, hemmed in on all sides, killed two of the infernal police, and managed to get to White's. I staid there several days, till I found it dangerous to remain; the whole city was up in arms on account of the killing business; but, blast them!" he continued, with a vindictive scowl, "I wish I'd finished 'em all! I dodged about, and got at last out of the city, though the detectives were hunting after me by scores. How I reached here, the privations I suffered, and all the rest of it, I will tell you some other time. Now then, first hand me a glass of that whiskey punch."

The Tomtit having deliberately swallowed two tumblers of this compound, stretched himself on a bench, and was soon fast asleep.

Mr. Beg returned to his arm-chair, lit his pipe, and gave way to a deep and earnest meditation; the tragic termination of the Tomtit's scheme of burglary was a matter of more serious consequence to him individually than he would have been willing to acknowledge. Lazy and inactive, his present easy life was far more agreeable to him than the exciting and dangerous profession led by his late comrades. He saw now that it was drawing to a close, and in his fierce disappointment and wrath he suddenly dashed his pipe on the ground, and rose impulsively from his seat.

The noise was so loud and peculiar that though his chief was worn out with fatigue, the movement awakened him at once.

He partly raised himself on his elbow, and gazed at his subordinate inquiringly.

"What's the matter, Beg?"

"We'll have to leave the Nest," returned the official.

"So we will," returned the Tomtit, musingly; "and the quicker we do it the better. Beg, here a moment."

He motioned him to approach nearer. The official bent over to listen.

"Now, then," whispered the Tomtit, "we'll go as soon as we can. That old woman of yours we'll leave behind. You understand me?"

Beg nodded his head ruefully.

"You will accompany me," continued the other, speaking in a sweet tone, "to France. I intend to live as a gentleman, once more. Beg, I am tired of this life. I don't intend to keep at it longer. I am a gentleman born, and a gentleman I intend to be. Now, then, that's all."

The Tomtit gave one of his expressive winks, to enjoin silence, for the good lady herself was still in the room, indulging, as a ventilation of her feelings, in a good crying spell.

"Shall you assume your real name?" whispered Beg.

"Curse the name!" muttered the Tomtit, "don't speak of it, don't mention it. I told you once——"

"The Tomtit shall be obeyed," returned Mr. Beg submissively.

"In *the devil's name what is that?*" suddenly exclaimed the Tomtit, starting to his feet. His agitated countenance imparted an electric tremor to the heart of the custodian of the Burglars' Nest—he listened and heard distinctly the sound of shuffling feet advancing towards the porch.

Beg instantly drew his knife, the Tomtit caught up a pistol, and the two, with half suppressed breathing, advanced towards the door.

Almost simultaneously it opened and revealed no less a personage than the redoubtable Mr. Snag himself.

That gentleman, who looked as hearty as ever, sprang forward and greeted the two with hearty welcome.

"Wot a go!" he ejaculated, surveying the Tomtit with undisguised surprise. "You look chawed up, you do; but rot me if I didn't think you wos a goner."

"How did you escape?" inquired the Tomtit, not much pleased to see his subordinate, under the peculiar circumstances of the case.

"I did it jolly," returned Mr. Snag. "Beg, just hand me over a tip at that lush. I'm hungry as pison too. Oh, rot me wot a bad go this eer is."

"Yes," returned the Tomtit, "everything is ruined, and all from that precious man of yours—confound you, see what you have done."

"Blast him," returned Mr. Snag, with a bitter oath; "rot me if I would have ever believed it."

"But you haint told yet how you got clear of the beaks," said Mr. Beg.

"We did it prime," returned Mr. Snag; "broke jail. Winker managed to get off his bracelets, and with an old file sawed Molecat's and mine off. Then we knocked down the jailer with a chair when he came in to bring our supper, and then took leg bail as though Duffy wos arter us. Winker got retaken, but Molecat and myself made tracks for the Nest. There he is now."

Mr. Molecat entered, and shaking the snow from his garments, sank on a bench, utterly exhausted.

The Tomtit, hardly deigning to notice his two subordinates, meanwhile dropped off to sleep again.

The two, after eating like famished wolves, followed his example, and Mr. Beg was once more left to his own reflections.

While we have been relating these incidents, something more important is transpiring outside. Figures are moving with stealthy pace towards the Burglars' Nest, and strange eyes are gazing with eager curiosity on the long-sought mystery of years.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

THE SPECTRE OF THE POND.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

The circumstances I am about to relate will be very well remembered by many of my readers. I think some account of the affair was published at the time; but in those days newspapers were not what they are now, and things or events of local interest were not apt to be spread far beyond their own theatres. I was but a child then; but I have not forgotten the intense excitement which prevailed in the neighborhood, nor the dark fears and forebodings which pervaded many simple, honest minds.

It was in a manufacturing town, not far from Boston. Just back of the village, in a gloomsome, dismal region, lay a small sheet of water known as Plympton's Pond. Now, the swelling tide of humanity has thrown up its dwellings close upon the verge of the lakelet; but then, the hum of the hearthside was far away from it. There was no habitation near it, save those dank abodes where dwell the frog, the turtle, and the snake. Upon three sides of the pond grew great trees, their roots bedded in the cold soil of the morass; while upon the fourth ran the road which led to a large farming district in the town, and thence to other towns beyond.

One day it was whispered in the village that a ghost had been seen at Plympton's Pond. A few who heard it shuddered; but the many laughed at the idea, and passed on about their business. In a little while the whispering was renewed: A ghost had certainly been seen. This time there were a few more to shudder. If ever there was a place drear and dismal enough for ghostly abode, surely that pond was it. Still, the spectral story could not be traced to any reliable source. This uncertainty, however, was not to last a great while.

One morning, a substantial, wealthy farmer, named Wardwell, who resided in the back part of the town, came to the village, and drove to the post-office.—His countenance wore a serious aspect, and he looked like a man who had been frightened.

"Mr. Cremore," he said, addressing the postmaster, "there is a ghost at Plympton's Pond!" His manner was so solemn, and his look so full of dread, that those who heard him knew that there must be some meaning in his words.

"Last night," he continued, as a listening, eager crowd gathered about him, "I had to stop here in the village till quite late. It was past ten when I started for home, alone in my wagon. As I came near the pond I heard a sound like a low moan. At first I thought it might be somebody who got hurt; then the thought struck me that it might be a wildcat—for you know they sometimes make a noise just like a child crying. When I came to where the pond opens up to the road I hauled up and listened. I heard the same noise again, and this time it sounded more like as though somebody was in distress; only it didn't sound like a child. It sounded more like a man. The night wasn't very dark, though it was dark enough in that dreary place; but still I could see clear across to the opposite shore. I was trying to make out which way the sound came from, and thinking to myself whether I should get out, and go and hunt, when I happened to cast my eyes out upon the water; and there, just about in the middle of the pond, I saw what made me shiver and shake as I never shook before. It was the form of a human being, all in white, with its long arms stretched up over its head, as if praying to Heaven! It came up slow and solemn, and stood upon the surface of the water; and then I heard it groan—O, how awfully! and its arms moved up and down as though asking for help. My horse heard the doleful sound, and when he looked around and saw the horrible thing, he started into a run, and I let him go."

Such was Mr. Wardwell's story; and those who knew him could not doubt his word. The only way of opposing his statement was through the idea that he might have been mistaken. But he would not listen to this. He *knew* what he had seen, and could swear to it. No fright nor fear could have worked upon his imagination. There was a ghost at Plympton's Pond, and he had seen it!

This, of course, placed the matter in a more serious light; and very soon the story had been told over the village. That night a score of men and boys went down to the pond and watched; but they saw nothing. On the next night they went again, but with like result. And so, for four nights, the watch was kept, and nothing like a ghost was seen. On the fifth night, however, those watchers saw enough to startle them with horror. There were not so many of them as there had been on the first and second nights; but there were enough to give reliable evidence; and their experience, as taken from the lips of the most careful and cool-headed member of their party, was this:

"We got down to the pond just as the bell was ringing for nine o'clock, and for two hours we sat upon the bank and told stories; though more than once we were startled by noises about us. At eleven o'clock we got up and took a walk down the road, and some of our number proposed going home; but I, for one, was determined to stick it out. It was pretty dark, as there was no moon; and even some of the stars were shut in by clouds; but we had got used to the gloom, and could see very nearly across the pond. After walking awhile, we came back and stopped close by where we'd been sitting, and pretty soon we heard something that sounded like a groan. In a few seconds it came again, louder than before, and more dismal. Two or three of the party were for clearing out; but I told 'em to hold on. 'Let's go together,' said I. Just as I spoke the factory bell struck for midnight. As the sound of the bell died away, the groaning came once more, and presently we saw something white on the water. It was right in the middle of the pond. It rose slowly up and the groans were awful! It rose higher and higher—until there stood the form of a man, in a great white shroud, upon the very top of the dark water! It raised its arms above its head, and distinctly cried out: 'MERCY! MERCY! FIND MY BONES, AND BURY ME!' I heard it as plainly as ever I heard anything in my life. The spectre spoke those words in a loud screeching tone, and then disappeared. We didn't want to wait any longer. We'd seen and heard enough for one night, and we came home upon a pretty fast walk."

This was the man's story; and the evidence of the others corroborated it in every particular. There could no longer be any doubt that there was *something* upon which to base the wonderful things that were told. The incredulous attempted no explanation, while the credulous said it was a ghost.

On the very next night over a hundred people kept watch upon the bank of the gloomsome pond; and, as the distant bell of the factory, struck the hour of midnight, the air was filled with the notes of a horrible groaning, and the bosom of the inky waters, where the reflected images of the stars seemed like sparkling diamonds in a setting of jet, was troubled by a tumultuous heaving. Then the pale spectre arose from its dark bed—arose slowly and solemnly, with outstretched arms, until it stood upon the surface of the water. There could be no mistaking that form. It was human—it was a spirit—a spectre—a ghost!

"MERCY! MERCY! FIND MY BONES AND BURY ME!" So it cried, in tones of deepest agony, and then it disappeared beneath the rippling waves which its own movements had caused.

From this time the excitement became intense, and extended to the surrounding towns. By night no one was found hardy enough to travel that dismal road alone; and even in the daytime those who were forced to pass through the sunken wood, hurried on with unusual speed. Now it was remembered that a man had once been missed—been strangely missed—that a man with a large amount of money had mysteriously disappeared. The idea took palpable form, and was told thus:

Some years before there had been a heavy robbery in Boston—a robbery of a large sum in gold and bank notes,—and it was thought that the robber had fled in the direction of our village. It was thought, at one time, that he was lurking in the deep wood near the pond. Our sheriff was sent to hunt him up; but the robber was never found. It was now remembered that our sheriff had begun to gain property from that date. The conclusion was obvious: The sheriff had found the robber, with all the stolen wealth about him; and the sheriff had murdered the robber, and buried the body in the deep mud of the pond!

What a plain and self-evident solution! As the whisper gained wings, and found listening ears, it also gained strength and corroboration. People now remembered how strangely the sheriff had acted at times; some said that he could not pass the pond after dark; others declared that he had not slept in his bed for five years; (people forgot that he had the asthma,) while nearly all shook their heads very solemnly under the impression that darker and more dubious things than that had happened.

But the ghostly problem was approaching a more consistent and harmonizing solution. For three weeks, during which the excitement raged like a mad fever, it had been noted that the spectre made its appearance on the nights of Sundays and Wednesdays; and this fact had become generally understood, and people came in from the adjoining towns to behold the ghostly wonder.

It was Wednesday evening, and crowds of human beings were flocking into the village. They came from all sections, large numbers having come from Boston and Charlestown. By nine o'clock the slope reaching away to the eastward from the pond, and beyond the road, was covered with a living tide. The moon went down at eleven o'clock, and then the night was dark enough. There were some stars, and some clouds; and the pond lay like a bed of ink within its flanking of grim woods. The clock struck twelve, and the waters became troubled. People held their breaths, and listened and gazed with awe and horror. Presently the deep groans broke upon the air, and the pale ghost arose slowly to the surface of the pond. There was a tumultuous swaying to and fro of the vast multitude, and the groans of the grim spectre were taken up and borne along upon a thousand lips.

But stop!—See! Why does the ghost disappear so suddenly, and with such a plunge? What is that other thing out upon the water? We shall see.

One man, a stalwart, hardy stone-cutter, had, by some means, gained an inkling of the truth, and on this night he had a light canoe carried stealthily to the margin of the pond, where it lay, with its prow pointed into the water, ready for movement at an instant's notice. He gained a companion to help him, and together they watched. When the bell struck for midnight they were ready, and when the ghostly presence arose to view, their canoe darted out upon the pond. The spectre vanished, but not for a long time, for the stone-worker had seized it and drawn it forth—drawn forth, not a spirit, but a harmless effigy, stuffed out with cotton, and enveloped in a winding sheet, with leaden weights upon its feet, and from its shoulders went stout cords, leading into the tops of two great trees, which grew upon opposite sides of the pond!

The stone-worker and his companion returned to the shore, bringing the ghostly effigy with them, and when a knowledge of the foul cheat had begun to spread, a rush was made for the trees wherein the operators must have been hidden, but they were not so easily reached over the treacherous bed of the morass, and as a score of persons found themselves floundering in the deep mud, the excitement grew apace.

However, all things mundane have an end, and so did this. The two men who had carried on this deception, when they saw the boat glide out from the bank, let drop the cords by which they held the ghost, and made the best of their way down from their perches, and glided off by a hidden path to the village. But they were known, and their secret was known. It had been ascertained that, for the mere purpose of frightening their fellows, they had contrived that effigy, and, by means of the weights upon its feet, sunk it in the pond. Then two cords, fixed to the shoulders of the figure, had been carried into the two trees, from which points the rascals could command the movements of their automaton at pleasure, their own voices, of course, doing the vocal part of the programme. During the daytime these cords were sunk in the water, and the ends hidden in the bushes of the bog.

For a time the two experimentalists found it prudent to leave for parts unknown, but finally, when the excitement had died away, and people's minds had become occupied with new things, they returned. But they found little pleasure in the memory of the prank they had played, for the good people did not easily forgive those who had so thoroughly frightened and deceived them.

THE STEPMOTHER;

OR,

WHO'S TO WIN.

BY J. F. SMITH,

AUTHOR OF "RICHARD HOFFMAN," "STANFIELD HALL," "MINNIGREY," ETC. ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER LXV.

> There is a history in all men's lives,
> Figuring the nature of the times deceased;
> The which observed, a man may prophesy
> With a near aim, of the main chance of things
> As yet not come to life, which, in their seeds
> And weak beginnings, lie entreasured.
>
> SHAKESPEARE.

It required great tact and delicacy on the part of Lord Cheverly to reveal to Maude the terrible history of her father's crimes. He knew the sensitiveness of her nature, her high principle, nice sense of honor, and trembled at the result. Had it been possible, he would have suppressed the darkest portion of his narrative, the death of her uncle, Richard Gaston, and consulted with Edward and Hector O'Moore upon the subject.

"Tell her all," said the Templar; "she has strength of mind to bear it. Religion will sustain her."

The earl turned an inquiring look upon his secretary.

"Faith, then, my lord, but it's my opinion, too," exclaimed the Irishman. "Better have little to hope than much to fear, to live in constant dread of malicious or imprudent tongues. It is best that the first shock should be the last."

"You are right," replied the peer, musingly, "and yet I fear——"

"Lady Cheverly is a wife and mother," observed Hector, speaking with confidence; "with such ties, a woman cling's to life."

The devoted husband was about to proceed upon his painful task when Collin Craw was announced. He followed close upon the heels of the footman, and appeared breathless with haste and agitation.

"I am not too late, I trust!" he exclaimed.

"Too late!" repeated the gentleman, not comprehending the motive of his visit.

"Have you informed her ladyship of the discovery that took place at Moultree?"

"Not yet," answered the earl. "Do not blame me. I am about to perform the task which honor imposes. You must allow something for the feelings of a husband condemned to inflict a fatal wound upon the happiness of the woman he loves."

"Hear me, my lord."

"I do not understand you."

"Lord Cheverly," said Collin, with calm dignity, "Barnard Gaston is already beyond the reach of human justice, and, even were he living, I question whether evidence could now be obtained to convict him of the murder of my unhappy father. Let the dark suspicions which blacken his memory rest with him in the grave; by making them public, I should only wring the heart of his innocent child—heap shame upon her head and on her children. It is not very necessary for the establishment of my rights that the crime should be alluded to, and even if it were," he added, "I would rather abandon the rank and fortune I am entitled to, than heap this misery upon my benefactress."

"Generous man!" exclaimed the earl, delighted at a resolution so unlooked for, "how can I ever repay your considerate kindness?"

"Your friendship has more than repaid it already," observed the former, "and the sacrifice of that which, after all, is but the worst feeling of humanity, is not so disinterested as it may appear. In drawing an impenetrable veil over the death of my parent, I consult not only the peace of mind of Lady Cheverly, but the happiness of my heir."

"Your heir?" repeated Edward, with a smile, "I do not understand you. Your son could have no cause to blush for a crime of which his grandfather was the victim."

"Say, rather, the perpetrator."

"What mean you?"

"That the boy I have loved and watched over for years," answered Collin, firmly, "will succeed me in the baronetcy and estates. I shall never marry. Had he shown less regard for me—betrayed one single regret at the discovery which threatened to destroy his prospects—it might have been otherwise. As it is," he added with a smile, "I shall be merely the steward of his fortune—the possessor, *locum tenens*, of his title for a few years. But do not tell him this—it would seem like bidding for his affection."

"Right!" exclaimed Hector O'Moore; "such resolutions often change."

"Not with me," replied the generous man. "Once taken, they are irrevocable."

Relieved from the most painful part of his task by the noble conduct of Collin, the earl sought the dressing-room of Maude, and gradually revealed to her the extraordinary disclosures that had taken place at Moultree. The guilt of Lady Alicia did not surprise her; she remembered the fate of her brother Albert. The discovery of Collin's claims filled her mind with terrible suspicions.

"*Have you told me all*, my lord?" she demanded.

"All," repeated her husband, with a smile.

The heart of Maude began to beat more freely.

"*And the death of my uncle Richard?*"

"Accidental," replied the peer.

His wife regarded him earnestly.

"Are you not aware," he added, in a tone of well-acted surprise, "that he was drowned whilst bathing in the lake at Moultree, a few weeks, as it now appears, after his private marriage with Miss Stanley?"

Maude sank upon her knees and breathed a prayer of earnest gratitude to Heaven, that the memory of her unhappy father was unstained by a crime she feared to name.

It would have been useless cruelty to have undeceived her.

Lady Cheverly accepted cheerfully the guardianship of her orphan niece, to whom she resolved to supply—if it can ever be supplied—a mother's place. At first, the widow of Lord Raymond felt disposed to dispute her right, and only desisted on finding the will of her sister-in-law indisputable upon the point. She would like to have had the disposal of the wealthy heiress.

Meanwhile, the demolition of the old house in Oxford street proceeded rapidly; the roof and upper rooms, including the one where Cis had seen the lantern-jawed visage of Humphrey Skillet peering through the skylight, had already disappeared, and the masons were about to commence upon the workshop of the locksmith.

Edward and Collin had always had an idea that the object of their search would be discovered there, and the proceedings of the men were watched with double care.

"Be careful!" exclaimed one of the overseers, as a portion of the wainscot was torn down and disclosed the artfully-contrived mechanism which concealed the recess.

Collin, Gill, and his wife, pressed near.

"I think we are upon the right scent now," added the speaker.

The former could not speak for excitement.

A second part of the panelling fell, filling the room with a cloud of dust. When it had dispersed, the long-hidden casket was discovered standing upon a shelf, together with a collection of housebreaking implements, for the making of which Andrews had been celebrated.

There was a general cheer from the workmen—the promised reward was gained.

"Who would have thought," said Gill Gervaise, as he placed it in the hands of Collin, "that it was so near us all the time? Shall the men continue, sir?"

"No."

Hints were heard about the recompense.

"It shall be paid," replied Collin, cheerfully.

He wrote a few lines hastily, and placed it in the hands of the foreman, who announced to the men that the gentleman had generously doubled the sum originally promised.

Their employer did not wait to receive the vociferous thanks that followed this announcement, but descended to one of the lower rooms, placed the casket upon a table opposite the window, and locked the door.

He wished to be alone when he opened it.

For some time he regarded the casket in silence; the feeling of excitement had subsided, the mystery was within his grasp and yet he hesitated to solve it. The beauty of the workmanship attracted his admiration, as it had that of the locksmith.

It was one of those exquisite specimens of art for which the artists of the fifteenth century are so celebrated. Upon the lid a group of nymphs were chiselled, rising from a lake, and holding above their heads an exact model of the casket. On the front a similar device represented them with it plunged *beneath the water;* the whole surrounded by the most elaborate arabesques.

Had Collin devoted as many years of his life to the study of art and antiquities as to the law, he might have comprehended both the enigma and the warning, but it was not to be. Still he felt a strange reluctance to break it open—a piece of violence rendered necessary by the absence of the key.

"This is weakness," he murmured. "Shall I suffer the beauty of a toy to arrest my hand, delay my purpose, tamper with destiny? No. There is a moral beauty in the designs of Providence which far excels the cunning of the artist's skill. The assassin would mock me in the grave could he witness my hesitation."

Collin looked around him for some instrument to force the lock, and quickly found several suited to his purpose. Placing a highly-tempered chisel between the edge of the lid and the casket, he struck a succession of blows with a heavy hammer.

It was some time, however, before the lid gave way; when it did, a cloud of dust rose from the curiously contrived receptacle, and sounds like the revolving of a wheel were heard.

The pungency of the dust caused Collin to cough violently; so subtle was its nature, that it penetrated at the nostrils and eyes as well as the mouth.

Still he had not the slightest suspicion of its deadly effect.

"Curious!" he exclaimed, when sufficiently recovered to examine the fractured lock. "What could have been the motive for such a contrivance?"

A small fan-wheel, attached to a piece of mechanism not unlike that of a watch, had been so placed that it was impossible to avoid scattering the powder placed over it without first immersing the casket in water.

The designs upon the lid and front were explained.

The powder was a subtle poison.

Italian works of art of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are celebrated for such deadly inventions. We remember to have seen one in the palace of Prince Barbarini, at Rome, which had remained unopened for centuries, the secret of doing so with safety being lost. It had the arms of the Cenci engraved upon it, and possibly may have belonged to the infamous father of the unhappy Beatrix.

Amongst a mass of papers which the receptacle contained were the title-deeds of Moultree, upon the back of which the grandfather of Sir Barnard had written an acknowledgment of his son Richard's marriage with Miss Stanley.

The certificates and proofs connected with it, obtained from Beckford and other sources, the writer declared to be deposited by him in the Bank of England, with instructions to be opened only in event of the failure of a male heir to the name of Gaston.

Such was the condition on which the haughty, revengeful man consented to restore to the issue of his eldest son the inheritance he had robbed them of.

It may here be observed, that it was only under similar circumstances that Sir Barnard and his heirs would have been compelled to produce the title-deeds of the estate.

The last thing discovered by Collin was a letter written to Edward Gaston by his father, upon his death bed.

"For you," he exclaimed, as his friend, who had just heard of the discovery of the casket from Cis and her husband, entered the room.

The Templar broke the seal, read the contents, and pressed the signature reverently to his lips.

"Thank Heaven," he murmured, "thank Heaven!"

"For an inheritance!" demanded Collin, faintly.

"The noblest a parent can leave. The proof that my father was an honest man. Read," added the former speaker, "read!"

"I do not doubt you," was the reply.

"Read it, for my dead father's sake," urged Edward.

The letter, after bestowing a solemn blessing upon the child he was about to leave an orphan, commanded him as he valued that blessing never to accept the inheritance of Moultree till he had used every possible means to discover whether his uncle Richard had not left an heir.

"I have no proof!" exclaimed the writer, "that such will turn out to be the case, except a letter my Brother Barnard surreptitiously took from me in which Richard acknowledged to me his marriage."

"He was worthy of a son like you," observed Collin. "My poor father! The spirit of Cain dwelt not in both his brothers."

"I can understand now," said the Templar, gravely, "why my false uncle for so many years suppressed this letter."

"The fool's wisdom," murmured his friend. "time reveals more secrets than it veils."

Instead of returning to their respective chambers, the speakers proceeded to the residence of Lord Cheverly, where Squire Beachum, Trevanion and William had taken up their abode.

"At last," exclaimed his lordship, when he saw the casket which Collin placed upon the library table, "am I to congratulate you upon the discovery?"

The title-deeds and the letter of Edward's father were produced.

Whilst the earl and the worthy magistrate were perusing them, the doctor carefully examined the long-hidden casket.

"Singular!" he exclaimed, pointing to the mechanism; "what can have been the motive of such a contrivance?"

Neither the finder nor the Templar could afford him the slightest information on the subject.

"There must have been one," continued he; "men do not usually bestow so much labor and thought on a mere caprice. Who opened the casket?"

"I did," replied Collin.

"With the key?"

"No, by force."

"And what occurred?" demanded Trevanion, thoughtfully.

"A cloud of dust, which the wheel set in motion, nearly choked me," answered the former. "It had a bitter, pungent taste. I feel it in my throat still."

The physician made no reply, but began carefully collecting such particles of the powder as adhered to the sides and mechanism of the casket; and, as soon as he had obtained sufficient for his purpose, quitted the room.

As he was known to be particularly curious in all kinds of scientific investigation, his departure excited little notice.

In the conversation that ensued, it was decided that the best way of establishing the rights of Collin to the estates and title would be by a friendly suit at law. The preliminaries were scarcely arranged before the doctor returned, pale and greatly agitated.

Evidently some fresh misfortune had occurred.

"What is it?" exclaimed Edward Gaston; "do not keep us in suspense."

Collin regarded William, and seeing him safe by his side, calmly waited the reply.

Trevanion pointed to the casket.

"For Heaven's sake explain yourself," said the squire, anxiously.

"You perceive the infernal contrivance by which the powder our friend spoke of was scattered, upon opening the lock."

"Yes! yes!"

"I had my suspicions, and collected all that remained adhering to the sides and wheel, in order to analyze it."

At the word *analyze*, a thrill of horror ran through the veins of his hearers, not one of whom found courage to ask the result.

"And found it to be a subtle poison," added the speaker, solemnly.

"Poison," repeated William, grasping the hand of his guardian; "but you did not taste it? Oh, thank Heaven! you did not taste it."

Collin smiled mournfully—*he had breathed it.*

"You now perceive," observed the man of science, "the warning conveyed by the device upon the lid and front of the casket—a contrivance worthy the cunning of the Borgias. It can only be opened with safety while submerged in water. To neglect the condition," he added, in a tone of deep feeling, "is death!"

The cry of agony that broke from the lips of William, as he threw himself into the arms of Collin, wrung the heart of the latter with a keener pang than the announcement of his fate.

"Destiny!" he murmured, "destiny! Let me at least feel grateful you have escaped it. How long," he asked, addressing Trevanion, "have I to live?"

"Perhaps weeks, perhaps months," replied the doctor; "possibly, only a few days. The time will depend on the strength of your constitution and the quantity of poison inhaled. Skill may do much to alleviate—to protract its effect, but is powerless to neutralize it. The doom has gone forth."

Despite their conviction of the varied and curious knowledge of the speaker in all that concerned his profession as well as in general science, the friends of Collin could not at once abandon all hope. The most celebrated members of the faculty were sent for. Several declared they could discover nothing to be the matter with him beyond a slight fever; others, when they had examined the powder, and marked the dilated state of the pupils of his eyes, looked grave and prescribed anodynes. Trevanion, on the contrary, advised stimulants, and finally called his *confrères* to his mode of treatment.

Weeks—even months—passed away, and William, who never quitted his guardian night or day, began to trust that the skill of the physician would prevail. The patient smiled as he listened to him—it was the proof of affection that cheered him.

About ten days before the trial was to take place, Collin insisted upon quitting his room and preparing the briefs for counsel himself, which he did with a succinctness worthy of his professional reputation, carefully avoiding in his instructions any allusions that might bring infamy upon the name of Gaston.

"It is not for myself," he observed, when Edward, struck by the peculiarity, pointed it out to him, "but my successor. Poor William," he added, "must not be made to blush for his grandfather."

CHAPTER LXVI

The last revenge is love; disarm
Anger with smiles; heal wounds with balm;
Give water to the thirsting foe:
The sandal tree, as if to prove,
How sweet to conquer hate by love,
Perfumes the ax that lays it low.
S. C. WILKES.

Fashion had given rendezvous at the Court of King's Bench, Westminster, to assist at the great trial of Gaston *versus* Gaston. The excitement equalled that of the Derby day—exceeded it, perhaps, as far as the fair sex were concerned—curious and piquant revelations were expected—the discovery of dark crimes more than hinted at, and eagerly received.

Society is naturally credulous where evil of those whom it smiles upon and shakes with a soft-gloved hand is asserted.

Rumor, as is usual in such cases, spared neither the living nor the dead; all kinds of reports were circulated, some of which went so far as to inculpate Maude in the sins of her father.

Scandal, however, for once, was doomed to be disappointed of its feast, the garbage on which the foul monster loves to gorge was withheld, or cast only in such infinitesmal morsals, that its appetite was provoked rather than satisfied. During the three days the trial lasted, the counsel on either side carefully confined themselves to the points before the court—the marriage of Sir Barnard's elder brother Richard with Miss Stanley, the birth of an heir, and his identity with Collin Craw.

Once or twice, when the learned gentlemen were approaching dangerous ground, a word quietly whispered, or a line hastily written by the plaintiff, recalled them from the track. This manœuvre was observed, at last, by the crowd that thronged the court, and there was a general inquiry of "Who is he?"

They might well ask the question, for the appearance of Collin was most remarkable. The poison had all but done its work; nothing but unconquerable will sustained the little that remained of life within his withered frame, reduced by suffering to the mere outline of humanity.

From time to time, William, who never left his side, presented his guardian with fruit to cool the burning thirst that devoured him.

After the first day, the result of the trial was no longer doubtful, and when the verdict was given which established the claim of the poor workhouse boy to the baronetcy and estates of his ancestors, a cheer was raised by the spectators so hearty and prolonged that the officers were unable to repress it.

Then followed what is rarely witnessed in a court of justice—the defendants, Edward and Lord Cheverly, in right of his wife, warmly congratulating the plaintiff upon the victory.

"Let me be the first," exclaimed the Templar, shaking him warmly by the hand, "to acknowledge Sir Richard Gaston!"

"Let my title be written on my grave," replied the baronet, with a faint smile. "I shall not live many days to bear it. It will soon be another's."

"Not mine!" sobbed William, "not mine! It will be sharing in the crimes of——"

"Hush!" whispered his guardian; "not a word, dear boy, not a word. It must descend to you unstained. I would not clog the gift."

From Westminster the parties in the great cause of Gaston *versus* Gaston, repaired to the residence of Lord Cheverly, when Sir Richard, despite the remonstrance of his friends, insisted upon passing the night in writing. Not even the entreaties of Maude and William could prevail on him to forego his purpose.

"You will kill yourself," observed the countess.

Her cousin answered her only by a look.

"Is it so very pressing?" demanded the earl.

The question was addressed rather to Trevanion than his patient.

The former made no reply.

"Answer as I would be answered," said the newly-acknowledged baronet—"truthfully and kindly."

"It may exhaust the little that remains of strength," observed the doctor.

"No matter."

"And unless important, I would advise——"

"It is *important*," interrupted Sir Richard, "and I shall die all the easier for having accomplished it: the wrong has been repaid—it is now time I thought of the *revenge*."

At the word "revenge" there was a general feeling of astonishment.

"It shall be a lasting one," added the speaker, firmly: "my father's death—my mother's wrongs—my own sufferings in boyhood—shall be comprised in it."

Without waiting a reply, the speaker quitted the room, forbidding, by a sign, even William to follow him.

His departure was succeeded by a general silence.

"The once clear intellect is clouded," said the earl. "I cannot wonder that bitterness prevails at last. Pity it should fall upon the innocent?"

"It will not," replied William, modestly.

"Poor boy!" murmured the Templar, who began to incline to Lord Cheverly's opinion.

"Whatever my guardian does will be well and righteously done."

"Even if he bequeaths Moultree to a stranger?"

"Even so," exclaimed the youth. "Oh that he may! To all of his own race, the inheritance would come clogged with blood."

The Templar was so struck by his disinterestedness, that he mentally resolved his own fortune should at least partially compensate him for the act of justice meditated by Sir Richard Gaston.

At an early hour the following morning, the baronet summoned his friends into his chamber, where he had passed the night in writing, and requested them to witness the signature of his will. No one spoke. The formality was accomplished in silence. With a steady hand the dying man placed the important document in an envelope, which he sealed carefully.

"I fear," observed the earl, "that the effort has fatigued you?"

"No," replied his guest. "On the contrary, I feel so much better after it, that I am about to make a strange proposition to you."

"Indeed!"

"That we all proceed to Moultree."

"In your present state," said the Templar, "it would be madness."

"I wish to die there," was the calm reply. "What say you, doctor," added the speaker, turning to Trevanion, "shall I last out the journey?"

The physician felt his pulse.

"Do not forbid it, if there is a chance."

"It is just possible," answered the doctor, "that with great management you may reach it."

"That has decided me," exclaimed Sir Richard, gaily; "I know your prudence to be excelled only by your skill. You will accompany me?"

"Willingly."

"And William?"

His ward was by his side.

Before starting upon his journey, the last the new possessor of Moultree was destined to take, a letter was written to the house steward directing everything to be prepared for his reception as quietly as possible, that there might be no assembling of the tenants; no crowd of curious idlers to gaze on the sufferer.

He was also instructed to find out Peg Manders, and remove her to the Hall.

Frequently, during the long and fatiguing journey, the friends of the baronet were alarmed by fainting fits and spasms, which increased in severity as they proceeded, and more than once Edward entreated him to rest.

"I shall die at Moultree!" replied the sufferer. "Providence will not deny me that last consolation."

The prediction was verified, although the speaker could scarcely speak when he arrived, and his strength was so completely exhausted that they were obliged to convey him in their arms to the state bedchamber, which the steward had prepared for the reception of his new master.

His old nurse, whose grief touched all who witnessed it, installed herself in the room. He appeared gratified by her presence. She and William passed the night with him.

Towards morning, he directed her to summon his friends. He felt that his last hour was at hand.

"You will not forget me, William?" he said to the weeping boy.

"Forget you?" repeated his grateful ward; "you rend my heart by such a thought; my earliest recollections are of your kindness. At school, too. Ah, those were happy days; not a week passed that did not witness some token of your affection or your presence. Father! friend! benefactor! you have been all to me: would I could die with you!"

"You will not blame me, then, for the disposition of my wealth; my title I cannot leave from you, but Sir Egbert Gaston—for Egbert is your real name—will not inherit Moultree."

"I am rich in the inheritance of your love," exclaimed the youth, kissing his emaciated hand; "add but your blessing: let me have that, and bequeath to whom you will the fortune which has cost the lives most dear to me."

With a smile of intense satisfaction, the dying man placed his hand upon his head, and uttered a benediction so heartfelt and sincere, he seemed to pour his very soul forth in his words.

"Bless thee, my noble boy," he murmured; "may the crimes and evil passions of our race pass from thee! May the God of truth conduct thee in the path of honor and religion, sustain thee in faith unto the end! May thy children and thy children's children resemble thee—mayst thou live in honor and die in love."

Lord Cheverly, Edward, and his friends now entered the room, and paused involuntarily at the scene before them.

"Approach, and let me thank you for all your kindness to me," said Sir Richard, with a faint smile. "There is my testament. Be kind to my poor boy—but that you will, for his sake; and think of the wrongs I endured before you judge too harshly of the only revenge I have taken."

A violent spasm succeeded his words. The earl would have led William from the room.

"No, no, I will not leave him; my hand shall close his eyes. Father and friend, I am by your side, to fulfil the duty of a son."

"Almighty Father!" he added, as the last convulsive struggle succeeded, "receive his soul in mercy. Gone! gone!"

Sir Richard was buried, according to his wish, in a vault apart from his ancestors.

When the will was opened, to the surprise of everyone, the estates were bequeathed to his successor, upon the sole condition that he exchanged the name of Egbert for that of Collin.

Such was the revenge of Collin Craw!

* * * * * * *

Years have passed since his death. It was only lately that our attention has been recalled to the melancholy history of the poor workhouse boy, by reading the following announcement in a morning paper:

"Married, at St. George's, Hanover-square, Sir Collin Gaston, baronet, to Maude, eldest daughter of Lord and Lady Cheverly. The noble father gave away the bride."

THE END.

A YOUNG WIFE'S SORROW.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

"I don't just like the tone of Martha's letters," said Mrs. Barton to her husband one day. Martha was a daughter who had been married for three or four months, and was then living several hundred miles away from the town in which her parents resided.

"Nor do I," was the answer. "If Edward is, in any thing, unkind to her, I have been greatly deceived in him."

"There are peculiarities of character and temperament in every one, that only a close intimacy can make apparent. And Martha has these as well as Edward. It is not improbable that something, unseen before, has revealed itself since marriage, and stands as a source of irritation between them."

Mr. Barton sighed. He was very fond of Martha. She had been a pet with him since childhood, and this separation, in consequence of her marriage, was a great trial. The thought of her being unhappy pained him.

"Suppose," he said, "that we send for her to come home and make us a visit. It is nearly four months since she went away."

"I was going to suggest something different."

"What?"

"A visit to Martha."

"That will be out of the question, at least for me," said Mr. Barton.

"I did not mean," replied Mrs. Barton, smiling, "to include you in the visit."

"Oh, then you propose to take all the pleasure to yourself. Now, it strikes me as a better arrangement to have Martha pay us a visit. It will do her a great deal more good than merely to receive a visit from you. She will get back, for a little while, into her old home, and see father and mother both. And then I will come in for a portion of the enjoyment, which is to be considered."

"I've thought of all that," replied Mrs. Barton, "and yet favor the visit to Martha. The reason is this. If I go there, and stay a week or two, I will have an opportunity to see how she and Edward are getting along together. We must live with people, you know, to find out all about them. There may be some little impediments to happiness lying right in their path, which I may help them to pick up and cast aside; some little want of adaptation in the machinery of their lives, which prevents a movement in harmony, that I may show them how to adjust."

"I guess you are right, taking that view of the case," said Mr. Barton.

The visit of Mrs. Barton was made accordingly. After the first brief season of gladness that followed a meeting with her mother had passed, Martha's countenance showed some lines not written there by sweet content. The mother asked no questions, however, in the beginning, calculated to draw Martha out. She wanted a little time for observation. The young husband was bright, cheerful, attentive and fond, as he had appeared to her before the wedding day. But on the second morning after her arrival, she noticed that he did not talk quite so freely as usual at the breakfast table, and had something very much like a cloud over the sunshine of his countenance. Martha's manner was a little constrained, also, and her face a little sober. Once or twice during the meal Edward exhibited a feeling of annoyance at things not rightly ordered.

Mrs. Barton was already beginning to see the little impediments and obstructions to which she had referred in talking with her husband. But she did not encourage Martha to speak on the subject. She wanted to see more and understand the case better. On the third day, the cause of trouble between Edward and Martha—for a discordant string was really jarring in the harmony of their lives—became more clearly apparent to the mother. The little external restraint which had been assumed at the beginning of her visit by both of the young people, was gradually laid aside, and she saw them in the real life they were living.

The basis of the difficulty lay in the total unfitness of Martha for the position she had assumed—that of housekeeper, we mean. And in consequence, her young husband, in whose ideal of home perfect order had been included, found everything so different from his anticipations, that a graceful acquiescence was impossible.

"I don't know what has come over Edward," said Martha to her mother on the morning of the fourth day, after her husband had left for his place of business. Her eyes were swimming in tears, for Edward had spoken hastily, and with ill nature, at the breakfast table. "He used to be so kind, so gentle, so considerate of my comfort and feelings. But he seems to be growing more impatient and harsh in his manner every day."

"Has the reason of this never occurred to you?" Mrs. Barton's manner was grave.

"I can imagine no reason for the change," replied Martha.

"He is disappointed in something, evidently. He does not find in you all he had expected."

"Mother!" The young wife had a startled look.

"It must be so, Martha, else why should he be different from what he was? He has had an ideal of a wife, and you have failed to reach this ideal."

The face of Martha, which had flushed, became almost pale.

"And I am free to own," continued the mother, "that you fall considerably below my ideal. I do not wonder at Edward's disappointment."

Tears began to fall over the young wife's cheeks.

"I'm sure," she said, sobbing, "that I have been to him all that I know how to be. If love would draw upon me favors and kindness, he would never look at me, as he does, sometimes, with cold eyes and a clouded face, nor speak, in angry impatience, words that hurt me worse than blows."

"But you have not done for him all that you know how to do," said Mrs. Barton.

"I fail to comprehend you, mother," was replied to this.

"You do not make his home as pleasant as it should be. There seems to be no anticipation of his wants, and no provision against discomfort. Everything is left to your two servants, who do pretty much as they please."

"Why, mother!"

"It is true, my daughter. I have looked on with closely observant eyes, since I have been here; and must say, that I am disappointed in you. In every case that Edward has shown impatience in my presence, the source of annoyance lay in your neglect of a plain household duty. It was so this morning; and so yesterday."

"He was annoyed at the burnt steak this morning," said Martha, in answer. "That wasn't my fault, I am sure. I'm not the cook."

"It is your place to have a competent cook," said Mrs. Barton.

"If I can find one, mother."

"The one you have, now, is not to be trusted to prepare a meal."

"I know that; but how can I help myself?"

"And knowing that, you never went near the kitchen to see that she did not spoil the steak intended for your husband's breakfast. It might have taken you ten or fifteen minutes to superintend, personally, the preparation of this morning meal, and so made it worthy of being set before your husband; but, instead of this, you sat reading or talking, from the time you were dressed until the bell rang. When we went down, there was no butter on the table; no knife and fork to the dish of meat; no salt; nor any napkin at your husband's plate. The tablecloth was soiled, and you scolded the waiter for not putting on a clean one. The meal opened in disorder, which you might have prevented by a little forethought, and progressed and ended in annoyance and bad feeling. Now, who was to blame for all this?"

"But, mother, you don't expect me to go into the kitchen and cook?" said Martha.

"The captain who undertakes to sail a ship, must know all about navigation. Is it more unreasonable to expect that a woman who takes upon herself the obligations of a wife, should know how to conduct a household? Is a woman less responsible in her position than a man? If so, what moral laws give the distinction? I have not seen them. The captain does not trust the ship wholly to the man at the helm. He takes observations, examines charts, and sees and knows for himself that everything is done at the right time and in the right place. His thought and his will are active and predominant in every part of the ship; for on him rests all the responsibility. And it is so every where in man's work. You ask if I expect you to go into the kitchen and cook? I answer yes, in case there is no one else to prepare your husband's food. If you have an incompetent cook, or one not to be trusted, then it is your duty to make up her deficiencies by a personal attendance in the kitchen just as often and just as long as the case may require. You contracted to do this when you became a wife."

"I don't remember that the subject was even referred to," said Martha, who did not yet see clearly; and who felt that her mother's view of the case actually degraded the wife into a household drudge.

"Was it stipulated," answered Mrs. Barton, "that Edward should engage in business, giving himself up to daily care and work, in order to secure for his wife the comforts of a home? I don't remember that the subject was even referred to. And yet it was as much implied in the act of taking a wife, as the other was implied in the act of assuming the relation that you now hold. Do you suppose for a moment, that he isn't active in every part of his business? That he trusts an incompetent clerk, as you trust an incompetent cook? Thought, purpose, hands are all busy in his work, and busy throughout every day; busy for you as well as for himself. He can't find time for reading during four or five hours of every day; nor time for calls on pleasant friends; no, no. His work would suffer—losses might follow; and comfort and luxury fail for the wife he toils for. But, this wife is too indolent, or too proud to go down into her kitchen and see that his food is made palatable and healthy; to be present in all parts of his household, with taste, order, neatness, economy and cleanliness. I don't wonder that he is disappointed and dissatisfied."

Martha's perceptions were beginning to be a little enlightened. She did not make any reply.

"Let me tell you how I have found it in your badly managed household," resumed the mother. "Perhaps, seeing through my eyes, may help you to a better appreciation of things as they actually are. Twice, since I have been here, there has been no water in my room, and I have had to come down, in the morning, and get it for myself."

"Oh, mother! That is too bad! To think that Margaret should have been so careless!" The daughter's face crimsoned.

"Now, if you had been a careful housekeeper; or a thoughtful one, you would have visited my chamber, to see that all was right there. You would never have left your mother's comfort dependant on the uncertain administration of a servant. Next, the room hasn't been dusted twice since I have been here. My fingers are soiled with everything I touch; and I am sure it hasn't been swept under the bed, or bureau, for a month. But, this only affects your guests—is only so much taken from their comfort. Let us look to some things that involve the comfort of your husband; for these are of highest consideration. You asked him, yesterday morning, to get you some pink-lined envelopes. He brought them at dinner time. He asked you to darn a rent in a black alapaca coat, so that he could wear it. Did you do as he requested. No, you read, and toyed with fine needlework all the morning, but never touched the coat; and when he asked for it, what reply did you make. Oh, you hated darning above all things! and told him he'd better direct his tailor to send for it. The day had become unusually warm, and he had to go out, after dinner, wearing a thick cloth coat, just because you had almost wilfully neglected to perform so light a service for your husband. Do you imagine that he never thought of your failure to do for him what he had asked? That he didn't feel your indifference to his comfort? Your kiss, depend upon it, Martha, touched his lips coldly; and your loving words, if any were spoken, were as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal in his ears. He looked past all lip affirmations, and saw the failure in deed.

"And failure in deed seems to be the rule under your administration of his household, instead of the exception. Most especially is this the case in what appertains to the dining-room and kitchen. The meals are always badly cooked and badly served. The slovenliness with which Margaret sets the table, is a disgrace to herself, and a standing rebuke to her mistress. I havn't seen a really clean dish—as I regard cleanliness—since I have been here. Nor a clean knife or fork. Your cruet stand is offensive to the eye. There is a smeared mustard bottle, with a smeared spoon—a ketchup bottle with half an inch of tomato ketchup at the bottom, and an oil bottle empty. Pepper and vinegar bottles I will not describe. The cruet stand itself is as dark as lead; and the napkin rings and spoons not much better."

"Pray, stop, mother!" said Martha, interposing, with a face rather nearer to scarlet than white.

"No; I must say a word or two farther. Can such things be, and escape your husband's observation? Can such things be, and not prove a daily offence and annoyance to him? Can such things be, and not irritate him, at times, into unkindness? He would be more than mortal, my child, were he temper-proof against assaults upon good-nature, like these."

Martha was not a fool—though there are too many in her position, we are sorry to say, to whom the word most singnificantly applies. She saw, through her mother's clearer vision, the blindness in which she had been, and the folly of her defective household administration; saw that, in holding herself above domestic duties and manipulations, she was governed more by pride and indolence than a just regard for wifely or womanly dignity; saw that, to hold fast her husband's love, she must do something more for him than offer loving words; for, life being real and earnest, demanded earnest work from all—from the delicate wife as well as from the more enduring husband.

On the next morning, as Edward lifted his cup to his lips, he said, with a smile of pleasure:

"What fine coffee, Martha! I don't know when I have tasted anything so delicious. Your handiwork, I infer?"

And Edward looked from his wife to her mother.

"No," replied Mrs. Barton; "it is none of my handiwork."

"But it's mine," said the young wife, who could not keep back the acknowledgment—her pleasure in seeing her husband's pleasure was so great.

"Yours?" Edward set down his cup, and looked across the table in real surprise.

"Yes, mine. I made the coffee this morning."

"You did? Well, as I said, it is delicious! I wouldn't give this cup of coffee for all the stuff that has been made in the house since we entered it."

The steak was praised next.

"Did you cook this also?" asked the husband.

"I superintended the work," was answered.

"It is only necessary for some people to look at things, and they will come all right," said Edward, "and I shouldn't wonder, Martha, if you belonged to the number."

There was a compliment and a reproof in the sentence, and both were felt.

"Do I need to say another word, my daughter?" said Mrs. Barton, when she was alone with Martha again.

"I think not, mother," was answered. "Since our talk yesterday I have been looking at my place, as a young wife, from a new stand-point, and I find that I have not understood my duties. But they are very plain now; and I shall not need another reminder. Young girls fall into some strange notions about a wife's condition. They think of it as something more ornamental than useful; as invested with more queenly dignity than a homely administration of service in the household. She is to be loved, and petted, and cared for with untiring devotion and tenderness; but caring for her husband, in the unattractive uses of a family, in the kitchen, if need be, does not enter some imaginations as a thing at all included in the relation of husband and wife."

"And coldness, irritation, ill-nature, and too often alienations, are the consequence," said Mrs. Barton. "You felt a change in your husband. Did not the cause present itself?"

"Not until you pointed it out to me."

"Can it be possible that you were so blind, my daughter?"

"I was just so blind, mother!"

"Do you wonder that Edward was annoyed, at times?"

"I wonder that he had so much forbearance," was the reply. "I wonder that he did not speak out plainly, and tell me my duty."

"You might not have understood him," said Mrs. Barton. "He could not have said all that I have said. There would have been the appearance of a selfish regard for his own comfort. Young wives do not always understand a husband's reproving words, which are more apt to blind than to enlighten; for they are usually spoken under the impulses of chafed feelings. It is better, therefore, that I should have helped you to see clearly in a matter involving so many consequences."

A SKELETON IN EVERY HOUSE.

When suffering under the pressure of our distresses, whether they be of regular continuance, or have come upon us of a sudden, we are apt to imagine that no individual in the surrounding world is so unfortunate as we, or, perhaps, that we stand altogether by ourselves in calamity, or, at the most, belong to a small body of unfortunates, forming an exception from all the rest of mankind. We look to a neighbor, and, seeing that he is not afflicted by any open or palpable grievance, and makes no complaint of any which are hidden from our eyes, we conclude that he is a man entirely fortunate and thoroughly happy, while we are never free from trouble of one kind or another, and, in fact, appear as the very step-children of providence. For every particular evil which besets us, we find a contrast in the exactly opposite circumstances of some other person, and, by the pains of envy, perhaps, add materially to the real extent of our distresses. Are we condemned to a severe toil for our daily bread, then we look to him who gains it by some means which appear to us less laborious. Have we little of worldly wealth, then do we compare ourselves with the affluent man, who not only commands all those necessaries of which we can barely obtain a sufficiency, but many luxuries besides, which we only know by name. Are we unblessed with the possession of children, we pine to see the superabundance which characterises another family, where they are far less earnestly desired. Are we bereft of a succession of tenderly beloved friends or relatives, we wonder at the felicity of certain persons under our observation, who never know what it is to wear mourning. In short, no evil falls to our lot but we are apt to think ourselves its almost sole victims, and we either overlook a great deal of the corresponding vexations of our fellow-creatures, or think, in our anguish, that they are far less than ours.

PLEASURE is a shadow, wealth is vanity, and power a pageant; but knowledge is ecstatic in enjoyment, perennial in fame, unliminated in space, and infinite in duration. In the performance of its sacred offices it fears no danger, spares no expense,—looks into the volcano, dives into the ocean, perforates the earth, wings its flight into the skies, enriches the globe, explores sea and land, contemplates the distant, examines the minute, comprehends the great, ascends to the sublime—no place too remote for its grasp, no heavens too exalted for its reach.

THE APOSTATE.

BY PHŒBE CARY.

Lord, I am come to appeal from man to Thee!
From man, who saith, "till flesh be crucified,
And our affections to the world have died,
We may not seek thy face acceptably."

How can I love the unseen, and not the seen?
Saying of him, whose hand has fashioned me,
And made all good and beautiful things there be,
"His words are holy and his works unclean."

Or come within the sacred temple's door,
And lift up pleading hands unto his throne,
Seeking the Invisible, and Him alone,
While my poor heart looks backward, not before!

Forgive, if that I speak be sinfulness;
But through thy creatures I may come at length
To love Thee with my might, and with my strength,
Lord! I have learned no other way but this.

If there seem mysteries in aught thy hand
Traced by the old prophets, yet that hand again
Writes truths upon the human heart so plain,
That whoso dares to read must understand.

Therefore I will not think my heart has erred,
But reason has not well interpreted.
Even though my eyes have diligently read
The teachings in the volume of thy word.

When over these affections Thou dost move,
Then loving human hands stretched out to me,
Surely must help to lead me up to Thee,
Thou whose most dear and beautiful name is Love.

Even as the young vine, that would upward shoot,
Clings at the first to branches, small and low,
So we, by human aids, to Thee must grow;
Tendril and blossom are before the fruit.

Love must give freely, and be freely fed—
As the red, living blood within the heart,
Which pulses through and back to every part,
When forced to inaction settles black and dead;

So do the affections, prisoned in the skies;
And that which would flow freely forth to Thee,
Through the sweet instincts of humanity,
Shut from its true and natural channel, dies.

And therefore am I come unto thy shrine,
Even by the way which seemeth best to me.
Lo! in the arms of prayer, I bring to Thee
All my belovèd, Father, make them Thine!

* * *

HUNTING THE ELEPHANT.

BY EMERSON BENNETT.

The largest and most powerful beast of modern times is the elephant. He is an animal to be easily tamed and domesticated, when he becomes very gentle, with very strong attachments, though liable to sullen moods or fits of passion, and especially to resentment for any affront. His eyes are small, but quick and keen, his hearing very acute, and his sense of smell so refined and delicate, that in his wild state he can, without the aid of either eye or ear, detect the presence of a human being a quarter of a mile to windward.

The elephants of South Africa generally move in herds and roam over vast tracts of forest, which they greatly disfigure, if not despoil, by pulling down the trees with their trunks, and feeding upon the branches, leaves and roots. There are also some peculiar bulbs of which they are extremely fond; and having discovered the location of these by their exquisite sense of smell, they use their long ivory tusks as plows, and thus turn up whole acres of ground in quest of them.

The elephant is a great feeder, and consumes the most of his time in eating, and sleeping a few hours in the middle of the night, sometimes lying down on his side, and sometimes standing on his feet. His resorts for gathering his food are generally from fifteen to twenty miles from a fountain of water, which, if the weather be warm and dry, he visits in the night, drinks his fill, sucks up large quantities of the liquid element to spout over his body, and then returns to the depths of the dark forest. In damp and cloudy weather he only needs to drink once in two or three days.

The elephant is not a clumsy animal, as might naturally be supposed from his huge bulk, but moves lightly, and even with grace. Owing to the soft and spongy formation of his feet, his free, easy, swinging step is almost inaudible; but he has a mode of trumpeting forth his anger, the sound of which fairly seems to shake the forest around him. He is, as a general thing, peaceably disposed, and seldom attacks the hunter unless first assailed, but then he becomes terrible in his wrath. The natives of Africa are generally afraid to molest him, but they will often accompany the white hunter in large numbers, and hold a regular jubilee over one that is slain, upon whose carcass they will feast with the greatest delight. The animal, however, to use an expressive phrase, requires a great deal of killing, and instances are not rare in which he has escaped with more than twenty balls in him. He is generally hunted on horseback and with dogs, which latter serve to divert his attention while their master is sending his hardened balls to the most vulnerable part. His immense ivory tusks are what the speculative hunter seeks; for these—from six to eight feet in length, and jointly weighing from a hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds—are worth, in the European market, nearly as many dollars.

"I shall never forget my first elephant," said an old hunter, who had spent many of the best years of his life in his favorite vocation, both on this and the Eastern continent. "It was in Southern Africa, whither I had gone to try my skill on all manner of wild game. I had been there many months, meeting with capital success, and gradually working my way into the interior, before I even got a sight of the colossal beast it was my ambition to attack.

"Early one morning, while preparing to break up my camp for a day's journey to the northward, some half a dozen natives suddenly appeared, and informed me, through my interpreter, that about five miles to the westward was a noted fountain, around which they had discovered the fresh *spoor* or tracks of a small herd of elephants, and if I was disposed to go in quest of them, they would serve me in the capacity of guides.

"Nothing could have pleased me better than this information, though I was fearful it might prove of little value, like much of that which I had from time to time received from a similar source; for often had my hopes been raised by such reports, and an actual investigation had shown the *spoor* to be too old for an experienced hunter to follow, as the elephant, in changing his location, as he often does, might not stop short of a hundred miles.

"Being determined, however, to let no opportunity pass neglected, I mounted my favorite horse, and, with two after-riders leading another, and carrying my extra rifles, and preceded by my guides and other attendants holding my dogs in leash, I set off in high spirits.

"The day was warm and clear, the sun shining in glorious splendor, and crinkling beautifully among the gently waving leaves of the grand old forest through which we passed on our way to the fountain.

"On reaching the fountain, great was my delight in discovering, for once, the fresh tracks of some half-a-dozen bull elephants, together with those of the rhinoceros, giraffe and various other animals. The elephants, however, engrossed my whole attention; and as their *spoor* led off plainly from the water, we immediately followed on in quest of them.

"After pursuing our course for an hour, we came to some freshly broken trees, and a long narrow strip of freshly plowed earth, both showing that the animals had recently been at work here. But the elephants themselves were not to be found; and in attempting to follow their tracks further, my men got confused and bewildered with some of older date, and finally announced the disagreeable fact that they would be compelled to quit the search.

"I am not, correctly speaking, what may be termed a profane man; but I think, if I ever needed special praying for, I did about that time. I had, for the last month, been in search of elephants, and my hopes of speedily finding them had been raised as often as every other day; and now, with my very hand upon them, as I might say, I thought I discovered a very happy chance of going another month on the same fool's errand.

"Telling the interpreter, who announced the result to me, to go to a place which is supposed to be rather warm, and take his friends with him, I put spurs to my horse and dashed away, leaving the whole party staring after me in wonder.

"I rode for at least three miles before I thought of looking around me or drawing rein, and then I began to wonder what I was trying to do myself. On my way I had crossed a strip of open, bushy plain, that ran between two forests, with the dry bed of a periodical stream in the centre; and when I began to gather up my senses again, I found myself in a deep, dark wood, so full of thorny thickets as to compel me to turn in twenty different directions to avoid them, in twice that number of rods.

"It now occurred to me that I might get lost in this wild labyrinth; and I had already turned my horse to find my way out, when I heard the crash of a tree at no great distance, followed by a sound resembling the blast of a trumpet.

"If that was not an elephant, then my forest education thus far had been to little purpose; and wheeling my horse again, I rode quietly forward.

"A quarter of a mile brought me to the summit of a slight elevation, where my eyes were delighted with the view of a large bull elephant, less than a hundred rods distant, which was lazily feeding upon the limbs and branches of a tree that he had just pulled down with such a crash. Being to the leeward of him, he had not scented my approach; and now was the time to act, or perhaps lose him forever. I would have given much to have had my men and dogs with me; but it would cause a long delay to ride back for them; and with the recklessness which too soon becomes a part of the nature of a successful hunter, I determined to attack him alone, and trust the rest to that good fortune which had so far attended me through the most desperate adventures.

"Riding around so as to get a thick clump of trees between me and him, I approached slowly till within a hundred yards; and then aiming for a point near his left shoulder, I fired.

"The report of my rifle and the sting of the ball, both startled and angered him, and at the same moment my horse bounded forward into full view. Instead of turning to fly, as I had been led to expect, the huge animal, the instant he saw me, gave vent to a loud, wild trumpet blast, and bore down for me with all his speed, turning neither to the right nor left, and bending and snapping the smaller trees on his way as if they had been so many reeds.

"Dashing the spurs into my fleet horse, I ran before him, and soon perceived that I could easily keep my distance. This emboldened me; and the moment he gave up the chase, I wheeled and gave him the contents of the other barrel. This led to another charge, resulting as the first; but when he again halted, with a second blast of rage, I felt not a little annoyed that my rifle was empty, with no other at hand.

"I proceeded to reload, however, with all the speed I could; but my horse, being unused to this kind of sport, became so restless, that I dismounted and finished the work while holding him by the bridle. The wounded elephant, meantime, much to my chagrin, made off at a long, sweeping trot, and by the time my piece was recharged he was out of sight.

"Remounting, I followed his broad trail for perhaps a quarter of a mile; when, as I approached a large thicket of thorns, he suddenly charged out upon me, with another terrific blast. My horse wheeled suddenly and might have escaped; but in his frightened haste he stumbled against a decaying log and went down, pitching me clean over his head. Before he could recover, the enraged elephant was upon him; and striking him a crushing blow with his trunk, that must have broken several of his ribs, he seized him around the neck, fairly raised him from the ground, and then dashed him down a lifeless mass.

"My situation was now precarious in the extreme; but I was so angry at the loss of my noble horse, that for the moment I thought less of my own safety than revenge. My fall had neither injured me nor my rifle; and getting upon my feet, I raised my piece and fired both barrels, aiming one for the center of the forehead and the other for the left eye.

"Both took effect within a couple of inches of my design; but instead of killing the beast, as I had hoped and expected, they only served to enrage him; and with another trumpet blast that seemed to shake the earth, he charged down upon me.

"Luckily there was a large tree just behind me; and springing quickly around this, I barely saved myself from a blow that would have ended all my earthly sorrows. As the unwieldy monster wheeled to charge again, I darted away to another at no great distance, and again saved myself in a similar manner.

"This mode of defence I was obliged to repeat some four or five times more; when, taking advantage of a brief cessation of attack on the part of my huge enemy, I began to climb the nearest tree.

"I went up with nervous trembling, watching my enemy all the while; but every moment added to my security; and when I had gained a hight beyond his reach, I felt like shouting for joy. I had not fairly got to the first limb, when he quietly advanced to the foot of the tree, and, finding my rifle, which I had been obliged to leave behind me, he caught it up with his trunk, and with one blow broke it into a hundred pieces.

"My situation now was far from being enviable—alone in a great forest, with neither weapon nor horse, and an implacable enemy standing ready to kill me—and when I heard the shouting of men and the baying of dogs, as I did shortly after, it may easily be believed that I felt a sense of relief to which no language of mine can do justice. They had followed on after me, and now appeared at a very opportune moment.

"On hearing and seeing the approach of the natives, the wounded elephant, uttering another wild blast, set off to make his escape; but the dogs rushing forward soon brought him to bay; and hastily descending from my perch, I mounted another horse and followed, and soon gave him the contents of another rifle.

"From that time till I had sent more than twenty balls into him, it was a constant scene of firing, retreating and charging. But at last he stopped, with drooping head, swung his trunk up and down some three or four times, reeled and tottered, and finally fell over on his side with a loud moan and a crash.

"The victory was won, and I doubt if Napoleon ever felt more pride at gaining a great battle than I experienced that day over my dangerous but successful adventure with my first elephant."

* * *

EVERY MAN HAS HIS FAULT.

Take life as it is—'tis a folly to sigh;
Or to seek for a treasure, when seeking is vain;
If friendship's a light that goes speedily by,
Regretting its loss is but adding to pain:
Perfection's a thing rarely found upon earth;
We may cherish the hope—and our fancy exalt:
But though we meet many of honor and worth,
We find, before long, Every man hath his fault.

If a world we require that will always be true,
We must learn where it is from the fairies or elves;
The errors of friendship are easy to view,
Not so easy the errors that lie in ourselves:
No:—perfection's a thing rarely found upon earth,
We may cherish the hope—and our fancy exalt;
But though we meet many of honor and worth,
We find, before long, Every man hath his fault.

* * *

THE SISTERS.

Adah and Susan Darwin were the daughters of an English gentleman of ancient family and large fortune, who had chosen to make the United States his home. This choice was doubtless controlled by the fact that he had married a young American girl, who was devotedly attached to her home, and to her family, who would not willingly consent to her departure across the ocean.

So, here he was married, and here two daughters and a son were born to him; and here, after years of almost uninterrupted happiness, of elegant leisure, and unobtrusive but varied charities, a double sorrow fell upon him. His son met with a sudden and violent death, and his wife, whose health had for some years been delicate, sunk beneath the shock and soon followed.

Mr. Darwin was at this time past middle life. He had not felt the decline of strength or energy until these great sorrows fell upon him. But strong man as he was, with a healthful but sensitive organization, he succumbed to the first grief he had ever known. Thenceforth he became a confirmed and querulous invalid, a charge upon the energies of his devoted daughters.

Upon Adah, the eldest, this task fell hardest. One year after the double bereavement, and as soon as she had laid aside her mourning, Susan Darwin became the wife of Eugene Allyne, a young artist in feeble health, who only became a charge upon her love and unwearied patience, for many years, when he died.

Once in each year during all this sad time, Sidney Mason came from his far southern home to visit Adah, his betrothed wife. Thus he had come for almost a score of years, but the day when he should call her his own, and carry her away to adorn his household, seemed almost as distant as when first he won her love. And the roses in Adah's cheeks faded, and disappointment rankled bitterly in his heart.

"Will not your father now consent to our marriage?" Sidney inquired, on the visit made soon after Eugene Allyne's death. "Mrs. Allyne will remain with him, and death has removed the source of all her cares. Surely she can now supply your place, and our happiness need no longer be delayed."

But he had not taken into account the selfishness of an invalid long accustomed to the exclusive attention of one devoted friend. Mr. Darwin would not hear of Adah's marriage. Bitterly he accused her of selfishness, of waning affection, and the angry excitement into which the very mention of the subject threw him, produced so marked an evil effect upon his condition, that Adah had no resource but to refuse her lover's solicitations. Weary of waiting, disappointed and chagrined that his happiness should be sacrificed to what he termed the whim of an invalid, he spoke words which could not be forgotten, scarce forgiven. Adah would not retaliate, but she set him free with a calmness of tone that sadly belied the tumult at her heart.

They parted—she in sorrow, he in anger—never to meet again in this life, the two who had loved so long and so truly. A year afterward came to Adah the tidings of Sidney Mason's marriage with one fairer and far younger than herself, whom it was small consolation, then, to believe he could never love as he had loved her.

Six weeks later Mr. Darwin died suddenly, and Adah was free!

An interval of peace and outward calm followed this last bereavement. Unless the messenger next called one of the sisters, there were no further partings in store for them, and they might have said, in the words of the poet: "Fate, I defy thee! thou hast done thy worst!" But they were Christian women, with that trust in the Father which no misfortune, or earthly sorrow, can weaken or destroy.

Happy they who possess that childlike faith! Happy the sisters, so long and sorely tried, that it was theirs when the impending blow fell upon their defenceless heads. A short time previous to his death, Mr. Darwin had been induced to lend his name to an old and trusted friend, and become security for an amount that nearly covered his entire fortune, which, though diminished by neglect and depreciation of property, was still ample.

The claim fell due, the friend failed to meet it, and the creditor swooped upon the still undivided estate which had descended to the daughters of Mr. Darwin.

They would not have resisted the claim could they have done so, and, with the calmness of despair, they saw their home and fortune swept away. When the debt was satisfied, a few hundreds alone remained to them of all their wealth and luxury.

Poverty stared them in the face, the necessity of toil was imminent, and these tenderly nurtured women not only did not hesitate to acknowledge it, but had the good sense and wisdom not to delay the day of exertion until their pittance was spent.

It was perhaps but natural that they should decide to leave the scenes of their lost luxury, though friends might have gathered round them there, and seek the poor home they could alone command in their fallen fortunes, among strangers.

They came to our village, and commenced there their new and toilsome life amidst uncongenial associations, and surrounded by many obstacles. But even here, heaven raised up friends for them, who, like my parents, could appreciate and admire their virtues though they shone out from a homely setting.

I would that I could truthfully record some brighter incidents in the lives of these excellent sisters. But I cannot. They lived until age overtook them in our village, still pursuing their humble avocation, and were respected by all, though truly known by few. And those few tried friends, mourned for them, though not as those without hope, when their sweet and patient, though sorrowful lives, were ended. And there were not wanting those who smoothed their pillows in sickness, who tenderly wiped the death damps from their brows, and planted upon their humble graves the flowers they loved. So, far from the burial-place of their haughty line, they sleep sweetly, "life's fitful fever" past.

The law of compensation is strict and unvarying. We may fail to see its operations in lives given over apparently to sorrow and disappointment, but we dare not believe that God is not just, nor that He is not tender and merciful.

* * *

THE DEAD BABY.

It was a night of anxiety and torturing suspense; the babe was still alive, but so slender seemed the thread of existence, that it appeared as if one more breath would sever it, and when at last the day god shook off the dews of his night's repose, he found the spirit of that young infant free from mortality, and on its way to Paradise.

But those who watched through the long, dreary hours are still there. They gaze upon the blossom that has faded—the bud that has withered, and as the tears fall upon their cheeks, they inquire of one another the best method of breaking the truth to the despairing mother. But it is told—and, oh, the untold agony of the bereaved, as she follows the little one to the grave. The last fond look is given—the heart gushes forth its anguish, and then that mother returns to her desolate home. But still the presence of her baby haunts her; for, oh, what power hath association. The toys with which he played—the book whose pictures released his gaze—and the little chair in which he sat, all brought him to her view. His sweet voice still rings in her ears, and she gazes round, expecting every moment to meet his loving look. Thus the days and weeks pass on, and none can tell the hidden grief that consumes her soul.

But yet there is consolation. She knows there is one angel more in heaven, and though her lost one cannot come to her, still she can go to him, and with this solace she is content. She believes the Word of God, and as she feels the desolation that surrounds her, she gives vent to the simple prayer, "Not mine, but Thy Will, oh Lord be done!"

F. J.

* * *

WHAT SHE DOES NOT DO.

A good wife never abuses her husband's confidence. She never prefers charges against him in the presence of others, or confides the story of her marital wrongs to comparative strangers when he is absent. She never tells other people that he does not bring home money enough to keep the house in food, clothe her and the children, pay the rent, and appear respectable. She never makes pompous references to relations who would rather go without themselves than see her and the children starve. She never questions the ability of her husband to earn sufficient money at his trade or in his business, or seeks to render him incompetent and ridiculous in the sight of others. She never usurps authority in her husband's house, or makes him the willing or unwilling instrument of her resentment, petty spites, or malignant malice. A good wife never does anything of this kind: she would rather screen her husband's faults than to hold them up to censure. She would rather mend and patch old garments for her children than go hysterically to her friends for a loan. A good wife is always mildly proud, independent, self-denying, loving, seldom finding fault, but always endeavoring to render her home, be it ever so humble, as sunny and comfortable as her husband's circumstances will permit. We are religiously convinced that if wives, as a rule, treated their husbands with more respect, and reposed more confidence in their integrity, society would be spared many of the painful revelations which daily appear in the newspaper press. Husbands should be led—not driven.

* * *

THOUGHT IT WAS NO USE.

"Why don't you go into business?" said a prosperous merchant to an old schoolmate, who was *down* in the world and couldn't get a situation even as a bookkeeper.

"Haven't got the capital," was the doleful reply.

"I suppose you know what *I* commenced on," resumed the merchant with something of sternness in his tone and air.

"Yes—next to nothing."

"Well, why can't you do the same?"

"I don't know why, *but I can't!*"

"Did you ever try?"

"No,—I THOUGHT IT WAS NO USE."

That's it! Just one half of the *unfortunate* people in this world think *it is* of no use to *try*. The whole of one's success centres in the act of *trying* to succeed. And

"If at once you don't succeed
Try, try again."

Don't think it of no use to endeavor to get along in the world comfortably and reputably. If you fold your hands and wait for good fortune to come to you, you may soon be an inmate of an alms house. *Nothing is achieved in this world without exertion.*

* * *

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

George.—A new story by your favorite author, Mr. Cobb, will be commenced in next week's Ledger. Mrs. Anna Cora Ritchie has written a number of tales besides the one we are now publishing. They were all popular.

Curious.—A stale joke is called a "Joe Miller" for the reason following: Joseph Miller, born in 1684, was, for many years, a favorite comic actor in London. Toward the close of his career, one John Mottley, dramatist and author, published a jest book, which he named "Joe Miller's Jests." It does not appear that Miller had anything to do with the actual compiling of this work, though it is probable that many of the jokes which it contained originated with him, or formed part of his stock of comic stories. The book had a great run, and continued to sell, edition after edition, for many years. Hence arose the custom of putting down a very old and familiar joke by calling it a Joe Mill r. Copies of the original "Joe Miller's Jests" are still to be seen in collections of rare and curious books. Besides the Jest Book, Mottley wrote five plays, a Life of Peter the Great, and one of Catherine of Russia; all of which, strange to say, have some value in the eyes of collectors, because written by the author of Joe Miller, though in themselves of no value.

Poverty.—We know of but one way in which a poor man can carry on an expensive suit at law; and that is, to get some lawyer to undertake it and bear all the expenses, on condition of sharing the damages awarded. It not unfrequently happens that a young lawyer, anxious to get business, will enter into such an arrangement with a poor client. Such a client, however, must be willing to concede to the lawyer the lion's share of the receipts; i. e., one-half plus expenses.

Rural.—"Suppose a gentleman should hand his card to a young lady with whom he was not-acquainted, what course should she pursue?" Take no notice of it, of course. "Gentlemen" do not hand their cards to ladies with whom they are unacquainted, except in some extraordinary conjunction of circumstances,—such, for instance, as the rescuing of a lady from some great danger by a gentleman unknown to her.

Mary.—Your case is one for a magistrate, rather than for an editor. The next time your husband gives you "a knock down," give him into the custody of a police officer. It is wrong for any wife, for any reason, to submit to such treatment. At any cost, it is her duty to free herself and her children from the brutality and contamination of such an odious beast

Four Boys.—No diamond has ever been found as large as a hen's egg. The largest diamond in the world resembles, both in size and shape, one-half of a hen's egg.

Boston.—Robin Hood is supposed to have lived in the twelfth century; the scene of his exploits, Sherwood Forest, in Nottinghamshire. Such a person may have existed, but, we presume, nearly all the tales told of him are untrue. Stowe's Chronicle, written about the year 1550, contains this passage about him: "In this time were many robbers and outlaws, among whom Robin Hood and Little John, renowned thieves, continued in the woods, despoiling and robbing the goods of the rich. They killed none but such as would invade them, or by resistance for their own defence. The said Robin entertained one hundred tall men, and good archers, with such spoils and thefts as he got, upon whom four hundred, were they ever so strong, durst not give the onset. He suffered no woman to be oppressed, violated, or otherwise molested. Poor men's goods he spared, abundantly relieving them with that which by theft he got from abbeys and the houses of rich old earles." We think it would be easy to demonstrate, from the known condition of England at that time, that this statement is, at least, an exaggeration, particularly as to the number of his band.

An Old Dry Goods Merchant.—Mr. Bonner is *not* a trustee of the body to which you refer. He was elected, however, but declined to serve for reasons which we prefer not to print at present, as their publication might possibly embarrass or annoy some members of the Board in question.

Endymion.—Here is indeed an interesting affair. Endymion, a young mechanic, made a resolution when he was eighteen years of age, that he would save money enough to go to school for a while, as during his boyhood he had had no opportunity to improve his mind. He kept his resolution so well that he has now, at the age of twenty-two, a sum sufficient to support him at school for three years. But, alas! a most unexpected obstacle has arisen. He has fallen in love with "a pretty, intelligent and industrious young girl," and is beloved by her in return. He tells us that a terrible struggle is going on in his mind between his love and his ambition. Ambition says: Go to school, get knowledge, advance yourself in life. Love says: Here is youth and beauty, intelligence and virtue; take her and be happy. What shall this distracted youth do? Which is the nobler part? Our advice to Endymion is, to consider whether an adjustment between Ambition and Love may not be effected. Say, *one* year's schooling, and then marriage; or marry at once and both study in the evenings together, with the help of a private tutor.

Woman.—No way of investing money so as to render it *perfectly* safe has ever been, or can ever be devised. If you bury it, it may be stolen; if you buy land with it, that land may depreciate in value; if you buy houses, they may burn; if you insure, the company may fail; if you invest in government stocks, the government may be overturned; if you embark in business, the business may ruin you; if you lend your money on bond and mortgage, the title to the property may prove defective. Absolute safety being out of the question, those who have money to invest must make of these choice of probabilities. We cannot answer for the particular savings bank in which you have deposited your money, but we believe that most of our savings banks are honorably conducted, and that your money is quite as safe in them as it could be anywhere; much safer than it would be in your own custody.

H. J. C.—This correspondent says: "I called on a young lady recently, and found her mother and another lady, whom I did not know, in the parlor. The mother left, to call her daughter, without having introduced me to the lady in the parlor, and was gone some minutes. How should I have conducted toward the stranger? Should I have spoken to her, or taken no notice of her whatever?" The latter course would have been the most proper. The mother might have had some reason for not introducing you to her; and, under the circumstances, it would have been the business of the lady in the parlor to address *you* first, in case she cared to have any conversation with you. Just a word or two, to put you at your ease till her friend returned, would not have been improper in her case.

B. J. M.—"I was recently introduced," says our correspondent, "to a young lady by her father, was only in her company *a moment*, and had no conversation with her. With so brief an acquaintance, would it be improper to send my card and ask leave to accompany her to church?" No—not *improper*; but a better way would be to call on the family, and during the call ask the permission you desire, when a natural opportunity presents itself in the course of conversation. The other plan involves a note from the young lady to you, which she might scruple to write to one of whom she as yet knows so little.

Interrogation.—This young gentleman proposes the following question: A young man wishing to marry, has among his acquaintances two young ladies equally pleasing to him, and equally suitable. One of them, however, is poor, and the other rich. Should he let the matter of dollars and cents bias his choice? If marriage is a mere matter of business with him, he should, by all means, choose the girl whose fortune is nearest on a par with his own. Great disparity of fortune in such a case is generally fatal to happiness in married life. If you are a decent man, you will not think of marrying for anything but love.

Helen M.—You tell us you are well educated and good-looking, and have a lover who is *not* well educated, but whom you like; that the family are opposed to your attachment. What shall you do? Do nothing at present. It may be a passing fancy which will soon wear off. Therefore, wait till you have seen more of the world, and know your own mind thoroughly on such an important subject.

Robinson.—The old saying is applicable to your case: "Faint heart never won fair lady. "You have excellent opportunities of knowing the girl, and you have reason to believe that she is not averse to an introduction to you. If you cannot overcome your bashfulness sufficiently to go forward and seize the prize, you must be content to wait until some less timorous gentleman saves you the trouble by winning her for himself.

Donna.—You say that a young gentleman not long since presented you with a ring which, you have since discovered, belonged to a young lady in the neighborhood. Shall you return it to the young man, or to the rightful owner? We should say the latter, as the young man evidently has not sufficient sense of propriety to know how to treat ladies.

Vestry.—Is it proper for a clergyman, in the summer months, to dress in light-colored clothes, like a layman? We see no reason why, because a man is a clergyman, he should wear uncomfortable clothing. It does not follow either, that *thin* apparel cannot be made in *dark* colors to suit clergymen, if they desire it.

St. Louis.—You inform us that you are in love with a young lady, to whom you wrote two months ago, and have not received an answer as yet; what shall you do? Find out whether the letter ever reached her—that is the first step; after that you can take any other you deem proper.

M. J. B.—When a lady is called upon by a gentleman, which should introduce the topic of conversation—the lady or the gentleman. Unless the gentleman is a stranger who comes upon business, the lady certainly should commence conversation with her guest.

L. M. M.—The date usually assigned to the institution of auricular confession is A. D. 1204, but it was not authoritatively enjoined until 1215, during the pontificate of Innocent III. It is probable that the practice existed from the earliest ages of the church.

Julia.—You say that your lover and yourself have had a quarrel, and ask which should make the first advances toward reconciliation. That one who loves most and has the best heart is generally the first to throw away resentment.

Thomas.—"Should I send postage stamps to a lady in requesting her to correspond with me?" Certainly; it is considered polite to do so if you are in circumstances to warrant engaging ladies as correspondents; otherwise you should not address them.

Tilden.—"Is a *snub-nose* a certain mark of an inferior intellect, as has been often asserted?" We do not believe in these "certain marks," having so often found them indications of the very reverse of that which they are thought most pronounced upon.

Sarah.—Are swings injurious to children? That depends upon the safety of their construction. Those that are properly made are harmless enough.

Mark.—Can a person change an objectionable name by applying to the legislature? So we are told. Any good lawyer can inform you as to the process.

⁂ *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*

* * *

SILVERTHORNE;

OR,

THE HEIRS OF CHESWOLD MANOR.

This is the title of a new story, by Sylvanus Cobb, Jr., the first chapters of which will appear in the next number of the Ledger. Mr. Cobb has been engaged upon it for several months, and he is himself of the opinion that it is one of the best stories he has ever written.

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